THE
NATION

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AN END TO ALIBIS

AMERICA FOULS ITS DREAM
DOUGLAS F. DOWD

VIETNAM IS NO MISTAKE
JOHN McDERMOTT

Property Tax Scandals
Bad Laws & Crafty Assessors MICHAEL HARRIS

GRASS'S MacBRECHT
FREDERIC EWEN

DIVIDED HEARTS AT THE WALL
DAVID CAUTE

•

OPEN LETTER TO KIESINGER / **GUNTER GRASS**

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LETTERS

brutal or insane

Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR SIRS: In your editorial, "Winning the Hearts of the People" [Jan. 30], the analogy between Operation Cedar Falls and the Nazi action in Lidice is qualified by the assertion that our men "shot only the Vietcong. . . ." This misses a crucial point: that in strongly Vietcong areas, extending over much of the countryside, all active males tend to be regarded as Vietcong. This is evident from the way in which the 24-year-old pregnant woman, quoted in the editorial only as desiring to stay in her bulldozed village, described the cirumstances in which her husband met his death. When planes flew over their fields, "he stood up and they shot him down and killed him." Was he Vietcong? Very possibly, but the important point —which can be documented in regard to "allied" operations all over South Vietnam—is that the defenders against "external aggression" tend to assume that the entire male population is the enemy. . . . If this assumption is correct, then the U.S. is committing brutal aggression: if it is far off the mark, then the policy is insane. *Edward S. Herman*

Hoffa & DRIVE

Twinsburg, Ohio

DEAR SIRS: Terry Eliot Tornek's article on "DRIVE: Teamsters in Politics" [*The Nation*, Dec. 19] . . . inaccurately cited a Cleveland primary as one example of the Teamsters' success with DRIVE, calling it "the only organization a long-term Congressman had behind him in squeaking through a tight primary." In fact, the Cleveland AFL-CIO's COPE, like DRIVE, supported the anti-Negro, anti-immigrant Congressman Feighan's primary fight against a challenge by one of labor's best friends from the Ohio state legislature. . . .

Whatever DRIVE's rationalization might have been, this endorsement was part of a pattern of guessing the probable winners, and then endorsing their predictions. This approach led DRIVE to endorse the anti-labor Ohio Governor Rhodes and his entire ticket, running on a Southern-style program of attracting industry to the state. Rhodes's slogan that "Profit is not a dirty word in Ohio," goes well with his record of undermining workmen's compensation and unemployment compensation in Ohio. . . .

I believe that an accurate reading would show that the Teamsters' DRIVE was launched in 1961 . . . not for any social or legislative goals but only for the narrow direct interests of Hoffa & Co., to try to get the government off Hoffa's back. *Bob Weissman, President*
UAW Local 122

Princeton, N. J.

DEAR SIRS: Though I claim no expertise in Ohio politics, I did study the Feighan primary thoroughly and came away convinced that DRIVE endorsement cannot be characterized as simply picking probable winners, and was far different from what COPE had to offer. . . .

Mr. Weissman correctly states that DRIVE was launched to win political support for the Teamsters' lobby, but he fails to recognize that the main goals of a lobby are legislative by definition.

Mr. Weissman's dissatisfaction with DRIVE springs from his obvious distaste for "Hoffa & Co.," and a feeling that their "narrow direct interests" are not in keeping with the best interests of the Teamster rank and file and the labor movement. He contends that DRIVE's main function was to "get the government off Hoffa's back." Since Mr. Hoffa appears to be jail-bound, DRIVE has obviously failed, in Mr. Weissman's estimation, and there should be little impetus from within the union for its survival or growth.

It will be interesting to see if the future proves Mr. Weissman correct. *Terry E. Tornek*

EDITORIALS

Redirecting American Power

Read together, the articles by Douglas Dowd and John McDermott (pp. 198, 203) point up a problem which opponents of the war in Vietnam should face but seldom do. For the most part, critics of the war are so deeply committed to traditional American political values that it does not occur to them to question the dedication of today's decision makers to these same values. Almost daily, *The Nation* receives communications based on the assumption that the Administration does not fully understand the issues in Vietnam.

The same assumption underlies an extraordinary number of published statements inveighing against the war or calling for de-escalation or a cessation of bombing. But as he protested in a recent—and rare—outburst of indignation, Dean Rusk is not "the village idiot." The harsh fact is that the Johnson team has its own theory of the war. Public and private persuasion can no doubt influence these warriors on minor or peripheral matters, but they are deeply committed to strategies which are not publicly proclaimed; they are, in a sense, instruments of American power, directed by it, carried along by its momentum. Disaster might persuade them, but "success" intoxicates. Short of a failure so massive that it could not be gainsaid, they can be persuaded to change directions only by political power.

The question then is, how can American policy be changed—not merely in Vietnam, but generally? How can it be made to embody cherished American values? How can it be reconciled with the attainment of desperately needed reforms in American society? The answer is: only through the redirection of American power. (See statement p. 219 on the theme of The Nation Institute's conference in Los Angeles on February 25.) Power speaks only to power. It is only through the accretion and application of political power that the direction of American policy can be changed.

Even at the level of persuasion, there is something now missing. The current public protests are often eloquent, moving, highly persuasive; no doubt they do have a cumulative political effect. But measured in terms of political power, they can be discounted as exercises in self-expression. General petitions seldom translate into political action. On the other hand, suppose the signers of the round-robin type of protest were to secure sponsorship for a nation-wide telecast assailing our policy in Vietnam and indicating appropriate forms of political action. The transition from protest to politics would then be bridged.

We are faced with a failure of power, not with a failure in communication. To the extent that a misunderstanding exists, it is the critics who fail to understand how this Administration, so notably lacking in candor, sees the issues. Stringfellow Barr is only the most recent critic of the war

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to echo Senator Fulbright's concern with "the arrogance of power." As Mr. Barr writes ("Consulting the Romans," an occasional paper of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions), "Rome was not bloodthirsty; she merely relied on force in such a way as to paralyze her imagination and make her inattentive to her neighbors. And I believe there is an analogy here with the United States." Indeed there is, as the articles by Dowd and McDermott make clear.

Tragedy at Cape Kennedy

Unfortunately, *Trud,* the publication of the Soviet trade unions, could not refrain from charging that the three U.S. astronauts who were killed in the Apollo accident on January 27 were victims of haste by space officials and that there were "flaws" in the spaceship. It is unfortunate because patriotic Americans will now be expected to rally around the National Aeronautics and Space Administration in rebuttal. But this will not wash. The charges have substance, and independent-minded aerospace commentators know it.

As recently as late December, 1966, the NASA "success schedule" called for a manned lunar landing in late 1968 or early 1969. These target dates were set to outpace the presumed Soviet timetable and to live up to President Kennedy's rather foolhardy deadline of 1970. Lest this comment be construed as hostile to technological progress, let it be noted that *The Nation* has never opposed the Apollo project and, as in the editorial, "Vietnam vs. Space" (May 23, 1966) has extolled the skills and enterprise which made it possible. What we do oppose is the conversion of a great undertaking into a juvenile contest and a test of American ascendancy in the cold war. Whether U.S. or Soviet astronauts are the victims, this competition is senseless from any humane, scientific or even political standpoint.

The NASA board of inquiry which is investigating the accident is composed almost entirely of men who, whatever their good intentions and engineering competence, are committed to the "gotta-beat-the-Russians" psychology. It is almost impossible for them to be openly critical of the guidelines that the Johnson Administration and NASA have followed and will no doubt continue to follow, unless deterred by condemnation from without.

On the technical side, NASA's board is entitled to a reasonable period of privacy for its deliberations, but the immediate cause of the fatalities is obvious: In an atmosphere of pure oxygen, fire spreads with explosive violence through anything combustible.

Many such accidents have occurred in hospital operating rooms, laboratories, factories, etc.—and in NASA test chambers. Nevertheless, the agency elected to use pure oxygen in its space ships, in order to save weight and reduce complexity of plumbing. The Russians use a two-gas system (oxygen-nitrogen); oxygen-helium is

IN THIS ISSUE

February 13, 1967

EDITORIALS

194

ARTICLES

An End to Alibis:
198 America Fouls Its Dream — *Douglas F. Dowd*
203 Vietnam Is No Mistake — *John McDermott*
206 California Revolution 3: The Soil Beneath the Blacktop — *Richard G. Lillard*
210 Property Tax Scandals: Bad Laws & Crafty Assessors — *Michael Harris*

BOOKS & THE ARTS

213 Alas, Poor Bertolt Brecht! — *Frederic Ewen*
214 Open Letter to Kurt Kiesinger — *Günter Grass*
215 Divided Hearts at the Wall — *David Caute*
216 The Great Human Option — *Edward T. Gargan*
218 The Winds (poem) — *Richard Eberhart*
220 An 18th-Century Man — *Jeffry J. Kaplow*
221 Records — *Benjamin Boretz*
223 Crossword Puzzle — *Frank W. Lewis*

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another possible combination. In the light of the disaster, the NASA decision to supply oxygen alone will have to be reviewed. A change at this stage would involve considerable delay, but if dangers within the spacecraft are to be added to the hazards of launch, maneuver, rendezvous and docking, re-entry, etc., the moon project may turn into a lugubrious enterprise.

Grissom, White and Chaffee were gallant men, willing to run the risks of their calling, but the question for the living is whether technical decisions influenced by the urgency of the 1970 deadline did not subject them to unnecessary hazard. Nor should the political aspects of the tragedy be ignored. NASA has never hesitated to exert pressure for funds by scaring Congress with the possibility that the Russians may get to the moon first. If it now tries to make an economy-minded Congress responsible for casualties, it must be put down firmly. The way to safeguard the astronauts—so far as that is possible—is to pursue the moon project deliberately, without harassment from an arbitrary schedule. If, as a result, the Russians beat us to a landing—and manage to bring their men back alive—it may hurt our pride but it will not be a national calamity.

What Goes on in the Congo?

As of December 31, 1966, the Council of Ministers of the Democratic Republic of the Congo put into effect its previously announced intention of "Africanizing" or "Congolizing" the Union Minière du Haut-Katanga, one of the largest mining companies in the world. The "Democratic Republic" is the fief of General Mobutu and his friends, if he has any. What lies behind this bold act of "nationalization"?

One explanation may be dismissed out of hand—that General Mobutu has been converted to socialism. Mobutu's record is one of suppressing any movement appreciably left of Center; his troops arrested Lumumba, and Mobutu and Kasavubu, between them, arranged Lumumba's deportation to Katanga, where he was murdered in 1961 by the secessionist government of Tshombe. It is hardly likely that Mobutu has got religion at this late date.

A more probable explanation is that Mobutu and his colleagues are engaged in a blackmail operation of considerable scope. However, there is no evidence that Mobutu plans to retire and wishes to accumulate a nest egg in some far country.

What is strange is the scant attention that the operation, however motivated, has received in the United States. The Congo, and especially Union Minière, used to be front-page news. Now only the outlines of the event have been publicized in this country. The ownership situation is as complicated as anything in this line since the holding company empire of Samuel Insull collapsed in the depression of the thirties. Under the Belgo-Congolese treaty of February 6, 1965, Union Minière ceded a share interest in its properties to the Congolese Government, with the balance held by various Belgian and French interests and Tanganyika Concessions of Britain. The latter's cut—14.47 per cent—is substantial.

But by the issuance of the decree of expropriation, the assets, which the company values at $800 million, were placed in a Congolese Government corporation, and Mobutu is offering 40 per cent of the shares to foreign investors. Thus a sum running to hundreds of millions of dollars is up for grabs. "Informed sources" in Brussels reported late in January that the offering would be taken up by a consortium organized by Banque Lambert, Belgium's fourth largest bank, and including the Penarroya Company of France and the Newmont Mining Corporation of the United States. Banque Lambert is said to be controlled by cousins of the Paris branch of the Rothschild banking family, Penarroya is controlled by this Paris branch, while Newmont Mining has connections with Lazard Frères, the Wall Street investment bankers.

Union Minière is in no submissive mood toward the interests seeking to take advantage of its tribulations. Its associates, Société Générale de Belgique, Compagnie Financière du Katanga and Tanganyika Concessions, which together own about one-third of the Union Minière shares, warn that any persons who acquire shares in the Congolese Government company will be accomplices in "an act of confiscation." In *The Wall Street Journal* and other financial organs, Union Minière has run display advertisements similarly breathing menace. Anyone who buys materials such as copper, cobalt, zinc concentrates, cadmium, germanium, etc., issuing from the mines and plants of Union Minière, is informed that these have been "illegally purloined" and that anyone dealing in them will be subject to legal action.

Since the seizure, the mines and plants have been inactive. Without Belgian help, Mobutu would be hard put to operate them. It is hardly likely that American interests will come forward with technical assistance out of pure charity, but the silence of the State Department does give rise to supposition. It could be that Mobutu, who is widely regarded as our man in the Congo and something of a protégé of the CIA, is working a squeeze play on the Belgians, in favor of U.S. interests.

Slough of Equality

Since it is recognized by almost everyone that the first need of the Negro is better jobs, one might expect to find the federal government in a gung-ho campaign to bring this about. It isn't happening. The federal government has, in fact, abdicated its role in seeking more jobs for Negroes, and the proof of this abdication is acted out, like a drab morality play, on two floors of a building at 1800 G Street, N.W., in Washington.

On the twelfth floor is the seat of Futility. Here are the offices of the Equal Employment Opportunity Com-

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mission, which was set up to fight job discrimination. [See editorial, "The Lost Agency"; *The Nation*, December 19, 1966.] The only trouble is that while it can investigate, Congress gave it no powers to enforce penalties against those it finds violating Title Seven of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It is a jelly factory. Since it was established in July, 1965, it has received 13,000 complaints of discrimination, and has found that about half of them were well founded. Of these 6,000 to 7,000 justified complaints, ten were sent to the U.S. Department of Justice for action. And of these, EEOC officials say, the Justice Department has taken one to court. One of 13,000. And not even that one has reached trial. About forty others have ended in lawsuits, but at the workers' expense. When *The Nation* suggested to an EEOC official that suing for justice might put a real financial burden on some impoverished Negroes, and asked why the EEOC didn't pay for it, it was told: "The NAACP has money for that sort of thing."

On the eleventh floor is the seat of Lethargy. Here is the Office of Federal Contract Compliance, a soggy and drifting limb in the backwater of the Labor Department. It has plenty of power but doesn't use it. By Executive order No. 11246, it has the power to cancel federal contracts with any company found practicing racial discrimination anywhere in the country. But one official told *The Nation*: "We do our best to avoid canceling contracts." They succeed in that very well.

Last month the EEOC called hearings in Charlotte, N. C., to investigate charges that there is widespread discrimination against Negroes in the textile mills of the two Carolinas. Of 194,047 total employment in the Carolina mills, 16,719 are Negro—8.6 per cent. This is in states where Negroes make up about one-fourth of the population and one-fourth the total employment.

Industry spokesmen, after boycotting the meeting up to the last hour of the last day, finally came forward with blustering denials. The charges were "malicious and irresponsible." But they did agree to sit down with the EEOC for a round of exploratory talks. This trivial accomplishment might be considered a major victory for the EEOC, considering its complete lack of sanctions.

Meanwhile, nothing was heard from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance on the floor below. The two agencies are supposed to work together, but they seldom do. Last year the Defense Department alone spent $1 billion with clothing and textile manufacturers via contracts (the breakdown for textile only is not available but it would be a hearty share of the billion). If there is discrimination in the Southern mills, and the EEOC upstairs seems to have ample evidence of it, why doesn't the OFCC cut off the juicy contracts? For the Executive order does not call for merely passive integration; it specifically requires that the contractor will take "affirmative action to ensure" that qualified Negroes are hired. Few of the mills even pretend to do that.

Public Television

The long-awaited report of the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television has been hailed by Jack Gould of *The New York Times*, as "the proverbial landmark in the evolution of the home screen." James Reston went so far as to compare it to the Land Grant Act of 1862. Such support notwithstanding, the testing of "public television" lies still in the future.

The most dramatic aspect of the report was the suggestion for an excise tax of 2 to 5 per cent on sales of television sets throughout the country. (If one assumes a tax of 3 per cent and that a $300 set will last for at least six years, the consumer fee for public television would be $1.50 a year.) It is probably a better method of raising money than the Ford Foundation's proposal of a nonprofit satellite. Nevertheless, those who are licensed to use the public airways in the "public interest" should at least share in the cost of "public television."

Money is only one aspect of the problem. The American viewer needs an alternative that is more than a reflection of the American mainstream. It must also be a vehicle of intelligent and forthright dissent. Here, a paradox arises. Congress must authorize the program. Yet it is from public pressure in general and Congressional pressure in particular that public television must be immunized. The Carnegie report suggests a way out. It says that at the top of the structure of public television there should be a nonprofit and public "Corporation for Public Television." The corporation would be headed by a committee of six Presidential appointees and six others chosen by the first six. The commission thinks that this independent public corporation, sustained by levies from the sale of television sets—plus local control of programing—would make the public television station responsive to viewer needs and wants. It is at least possible.

The commission's enthusiasm for local control of programing raises another set of problems. Will the local stations be sufficiently bold in the face of community pressure to present the controversial idea? The experience of the relatively innocuous National Educational Television has been that the national organization is far more independent and unafraid than its local affiliates.

Other questions present themselves. For instance, if public television does gain a sizable audience for superior programing, the hope is that the networks would respond to the competition by offering better programs of their own. But they might concentrate on the money-makers and leave ideas to the nonprofit sector.

However, these questions aside, the Carnegie Commission report is an exciting first step. It offers a diagram and defines the goals. The commission estimates that a full network of 380 public stations (there are now 124 education stations) could be operating by 1980 with a budget of $270 million. The figure seems low—the cost of about two weeks of fighting in Vietnam.

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AN END TO ALIBIS

1. America Fouls Its Dream

DOUGLAS F. DOWD

Mr. Dowd, professor of economics at Cornell University, is at present on leave as a Fulbright professor of economics, teaching at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Bologna, Italy. He is the author, in addition to several books in his field, of Step by Step *(Norton), an account of the civil rights movement, written in collaboration with Mary Nichols.*

Bologna

America! It was not too long ago that the mere mention of our land—whether to others or ourselves—was the cause of at least a slight shiver of delight, or hope or desire; mixed, to be sure, with some degree of amusement, or contempt or fear. Still, *America!* land of promises, of social, political and economic achievements barely dreamed of elsewhere; land of abundance, mobility, social experiment, democracy, classlessness, freedom, marvelous humor—land, in short, of opportunities for the realization of man.

Justly so?

Justly so; up to a point. The thrust of our development enabled us to overcome the weight of mediocrities, of corruption, greed, know-nothingness—of the violence to body and spirit meted out (especially but not only) to red and black men. Up to a point, and so it seemed, for those whose voices were heard. Today it seems less so, and not because we hear new voices. Shivers of apprehension noticeably replace shivers of delight.

Fear, disenchantment and bitterness grow daily in and about America, at home and abroad. It is a growth becoming lush. Are there deep roots to this development, or is what we see the result merely of seeds scattered by querulous youngsters on the one hand, beady-eyed fanatics on the other—seeds that can find no congenial soil in the American garden?

But first, what is it about America today that even prompts such questions? A lengthening list forms in the mind. It is popular to place the war in Vietnam at its head, to give it the dubious honor of *causa causans*. But is not Vietnam, though unquestionably a powerful wrecker, more consequence than cause of our condition? Could *America!* be involved in such filthy deeds?

Especially among liberal critics, our involvement in the war is looked upon as something of an accident, the result of a series of largely well-intentioned miscalculations that have—with the push of a handful of misguided men of power—caught us up in a process from which there is no easy extrication. Worse, for these same critics, there exists an inverse relationship between rising war expenditures and our ability to cope with serious domestic and international problems in the connected areas of race, poverty, housing, education, dying cities, the needs of the desperate two-thirds of the world.

Other things being equal, who could quarrel with such notions? They cannot be quarreled with, except by looking at other things. In doing so, one finds that the Vietnamese War has become a convenient and comforting, if also an awkward, explanation as to why the American dream fades, an explanation that locates the source of our troubles closer to our stars than to ourselves.

In what encouraging sense may it be said that the Johnson Administration does not represent the American people? What substantial bloc of American voters, of Congressmen or Senators, opposes the Johnson Administration, except in details, or except to depart even further from the dream? Does a majority of the American people wish an end to the war in Vietnam, brought about by means less dreadful, more constructive, than those currently in use? If the credibility gap were to be closed, for example, would that mean bringing public relations closer to reality, or reality closer to public relations? How many would dare entrust a full and secret vote of the American people to choose between the positions of, say, U Thant, LBJ or the Hon. Mendel Rivers?

Or, on domestic issues, does the majority honestly will the day when Negroes, Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans will exist as equals in America? When the poor will have power and dignity and realistic access to the advantages of, and a voice in shaping, America? Do the American people wish to make that effort of imagination and will required to build our cities into places of creative enjoyment—places even of decency, cleanliness, comfort, safety? As between an educational system designed to enhance the marvelous possibilities of the young (and of society), and the dreary foolishness of the present system at all levels, how do the American people choose?

A credibility gap there is, between the Administration's words and the facts. The more important credibility gap, however, is between the image that Americans like to have of their society, and what Americans work for and do, what their society is. This is not to say that, in terms of what is done, America is worse than other societies, Americans worse than other peoples; our evil consists of believing that we are better than others—and it consists as well of our being able to be so much better than we are, of our being able in fact to make our image a reality.

The gap between what Americans are in practice, and what with our ideals and our resources we should be, is as a Grand Canyon that separates actuality from possibility. President Johnson indeed represents us; like us, he cannot face—perhaps cannot comprehend—the truth. But Johnson's gap is a line scratched in the sand; we the people have allowed the earth to open. It is this gap, this chasm between reality and ideal, that defines the American crisis. It is this gap into which America slides.

Steadily and surely, America has stumbled into unprecedented abundance for the majority, and has cre-

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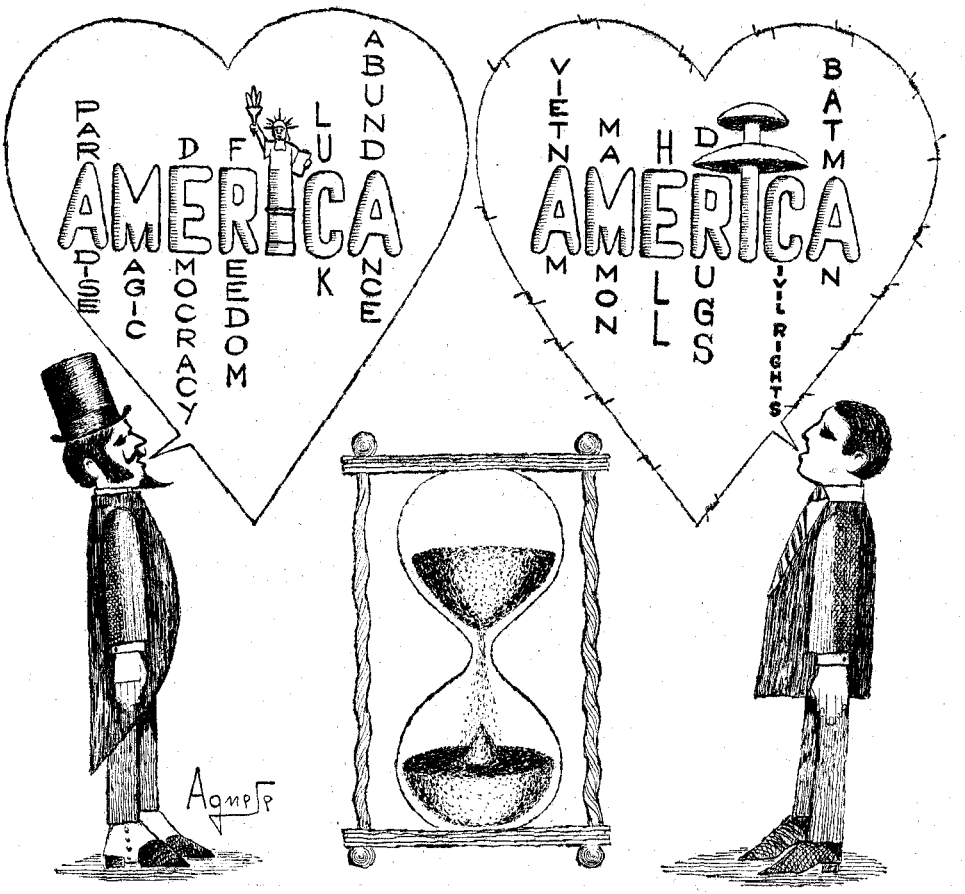
ated in the process a majority whose heart's desire is for still more abundance, whose shimmering brightness is enough to blind us to any intrusions—seemingly, but not in fact—competitive with growing heaps of things. This year, we shall have a gross national product in excess of $750 billion; on modest assumptions about our future growth rate, we shall pass a $1 trillion gross national product several years before 1984. In 1964, when President Johnson announced the war on poverty, he also announced that there were 30 million poor people in the United States. (Michael Harrington and Leon Keyserling, using a less politic definition of poverty, put the figure at between 40 and 50 million—more people than there are *in toto* in Mexico, or Italy, or Great Britain or France.) In his Economic Report to Congress in 1966, the President stated that there were 32 million poor people in the United States. The number of poor people had increased by 2 million in a period when our growth rate was between 5 and 6 per cent. Could that have been because of our economic inability to cope with both the war abroad and the war at home? It does not seem so.

Suppose GNP to rise at 4 per cent per annum. Suppose that, beginning with this year's GNP of between $750 and $800 billion one were to propose that half of the *increase*—i.e., about $15 billion—be employed to allow the poor to earn incomes through helping to plan and carry out the reconstruction of their housing and educational facilities, and the reconstruction as well of the sprawl and tangle that defeats and strangles us in our daily coming and going. The remainder of the annual increase could, of course, go toward raising the real levels of life for the already well-off Americans, levels already high and rising in any event (the level rises without an increase in income, as the well-off fill out gaps in their possessions). Suppose too, that current estimates for the termination date of the Vietnamese War are valid; that is, suppose that at some time in the next five to ten years another $20 billion-plus will be "released." Suppose, finally, that it is made clear that a cutback in the war would both make possible and require additional expenditures for social enhancement, if GNP were to continue to grow.

Suppose, in short, that there is no simple-minded economic reason for us to assume that the obstacles to social improvement are to be found in shortages of resources. Who, after all these suppositions have been made, believes that the American people are prepared to support, let alone insist upon, even the bare bones of a modest but meaningful program of social reconstruction? If we would tomorrow, why have we not yesterday, when all this was equally possible? Was it the personal inadequacies of Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson that held us back, their string of miscalculations on Southeast Asia (that look almost systematic in retrospect) that fouled our dream?

No. Vietnam is not our incubus. It is our fix. We need it—not, as some have said, as an outlet for our GNP, or to give vent to imperialistic high spirits. There may indeed be some emerging validity to such notions; but whatever validity there is pales beside the social catharsis provided by the war—remembering that a catharsis provides some



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pain as well as some relief. We are a society in crisis, faced with the need for new and large resolutions. The crisis is not confined within our borders. It is world-wide, and the share of it that we see at home is an almost exact, miniature replica of the larger scene—where poor contend against rich, colored against white, powerless against powerful. Our power to move toward an easing of those crises is immense; Vietnam is our boyish way of both obscuring and deepening the crises at home and abroad. That we should behave so is not a product of eminent personalities or historical accidents; it is a product of our development as a people.

The process began no later than the American Revolution. Like most revolutions, ours was brought into being by diverse people, some with diverse aims, some with a single motivation (whether glory, or profit, or land, or power or freedom). Our revolution, as distinct from our war with Britain, neither failed nor succeeded; it opened ways for social change. Just which way we would travel, who would decide and how, who would pay and who would gain, were the issues that produced the numerous conflicts of our first century as a nation.

Some of these issues are still unresolved; but which way we would travel, and who would decide, using what criteria, were questions that began to receive hard answers before Jackson left office. We were to be a businesslike, and businessman's, society. Our economy was to be ruggedly capitalistic, but flexible enough, for a while, to work well with part of its people enslaved. When it became clear that rugged capitalism meant also industrial capitalism, the power of slaveholders—not over their slaves, but over the destiny of the nation—had to be dissolved. Whether that would be accomplished by Southerners giving up their power or having it taken from them by force was up to Southerners to decide. The Civil War demonstrated well the ferocity that Americans have in them and how, like others elsewhere, they will use it ferociously for ignoble purposes. (Unless one assumes, as is only rarely believed today, that the war was fought by the North to end slavery, or by the South to maintain political freedom.)

In the half century or so following the Civil War we developed and hardened the traits and institutions by which we have lived and died ever since. More than merely symbolic among these was our ability to ignore the continuing *de facto* enslavement of Negroes in America. That period was our prep school; we learned then to accustom ourselves to a reality that defied our ideals.

Hypocrisy was not invented in America, nor was industrial capitalism. But both have been carried further by us than by others; we have interwoven their strands to form our character as a people. David M. Potter has ably dubbed us and explained us as the "people of plenty." The term may be carried further: We are a people who have learned to live with any quality of existence as long as the quantitative balance is high and rising; a people who decry organized power—whether it be political, or economic or social—but who live under concentrated power of all sorts, and look the other way as long as the price is right; a people who profess to love equality, freedom, dignity for themselves and others, but who only curtsy when these are betrayed by or for themselves and others. (Is it not probable that the outcry against "black power" arises not merely from hatred or fear of black people but from a fear, doubtless unconscious, that any serious confrontation with questions of power, freedom and dignity would cause not just the poor but the rest of us to face our own powerlessness, our own constraints, our own indignity in our own work, our own politics, our own daily social relationships?) Like all others, we profess to love peace not the sword; but, like all others, our response to threats—or to the easy promise of territorial gain—has customarily been to rattle or unsheath the sword.

As a people, Americans have of course placed first things first. We have produced a definition of first things that—quite conveniently in a business society—ineluctably made the first thing the search for gain, and it's each for himself and God for all. Material self-interest as the highest of the priorities has become so fully absorbed in the American style that it is also unconscious, imperialistic in its reach, redefining all else to suit, or placing all else in a penumbra of qualification: except as second thoughts, except upon ritualistic occasion, except in the once-weekly church of the spirit. Except, perhaps, for the young.

The young are the place to look first in America today, to see what we have become, are becoming; to see, also, what hope there is for realization of the lingering dream. If by the young we mean to include those between (say) 16 and 25, they fall naturally into three groups, defined not by age but by outlook and behavior. There is that very largest of the three groups, a large lump of young men and women who go about cheerfully doing their duty—in school, in office, and farm, and factory, at home and in the armed services. At these tasks they do passably, or very well. There is a smaller, still substantial, group that performs its tasks well, but with misgiving, questions, puzzlement; wondering if something has gone wrong, at times even knowing that it has. They will be found in all the same functions, but also in the Peace Corps, in VISTA, even, some of them, in civil rights and protest groups. In not too many years their tasks will push them into the oblivion of the largest group, or their consciousness and conscience into the last and smallest of the groups.

This last group grows most rapidly, and its growth is most rapid among the very youngest, the teen-agers; but its most vocal representatives are also its oldest members. They may do well at school, or may have done so at one time; but they do best at withdrawing, at turning thumbs down—thumbs down on the rhetoric as well as the goods of the affluent society; on the family, on business, on, not least, the government. (Who can dislike one of their buttons: "I am an enemy of the State"?) Since they cannot believe in America, how can they believe in dying, let alone killing, for it? This is not to say that they lack ideals. It is this frequently raucous (sometimes very silent), often dirty, usually ineffectual, always impious group of "kids" that has taken most seriously the ideals of America—ideals of freedom, brotherhood, honesty, dignity, peace—and found them badly wanting. Growing up in an opulent world, they can find no great urge to make money nor, on reflection, would it make much sense if

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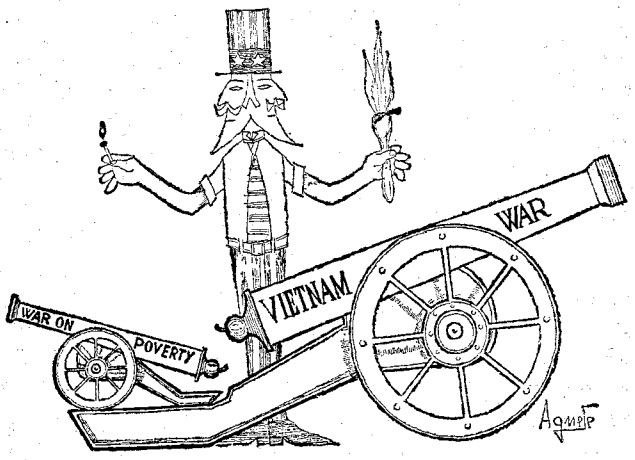
they did. On the other hand, what they could believe in, and work for, they cannot find in reality. These are disappointed lovers, wide-eyed still with the romance of America, angry rather than cynical; not yet smooth. The heartbeat of America for them is a cacophony, a horror of lies.

When one comes to know the members of this last group (not easy, if one is over 25), and many of the middle bunch, one finds them to be attractive. One cannot but worry about their future. In doing so, however, one is worrying about the future of America. The young face reality as their elders do not. The reality they see is one in which the technology, resources and ideals of America have rendered possible (*Now!* as they would say) the realization of a dream; there are no more ex-



cuses. The basis of their opposition boils down to one word: hypocrisy. They see the reality of war and racism and poverty, and ugliness and conformity and mindless education, acquiesced in and extended by their parents (their parents: who, many of them disapproving of the war, raise no public voice against it, seek at most the ignominious ways of having other youngsters do the dirty work), their teachers and preachers, their intellectual, business and political leaders. They see killing justified in the name of freedom by those who shut their eyes to oppression in their own neighborhoods. They juxtapose the soap commercial and the political commercial, and are aware that the same minds have corrupted themselves to bring both messages to them.

The young see, if they cannot always explain, a society that—lacking the guts even to face it—pursues the possession of things as though it were a Godhead, or the Holy Grail, were located in the bucket seat of a Thunderbird. They see, in short, a society that has worked so long and passionately for Mammon, it can no longer distinguish between Mammon, God and Caesar. (Is it unimportant that they also see a society almost ludicrously prurient that makes voyeurism into a big business?)

Perhaps the young cannot explain what they see; but they have the ability to attack, or to withdraw. Alone, they are not likely to carry themselves or us to a more reasonable, more honest, decent, basically civilized society. But, as they turn away from what we have created, they can make the rest of us look more closely at what we are, make us wonder why. It was the young—blacks first, and then whites—who did that for us in civil rights, which in turn opened our eyes to the country's widespread poverty. When we failed them there, and failed ourselves, we exposed the American crisis. It was the young who began the opposition to the war in Vietnam, and who largely continue it. The young have done more than their share; if the job of keeping the American flame alive is to be done, it shall be done by the rest of us, or not at all. But if we are to do that job, we have much to learn, and to unlearn.

It has been said that all societies have the defects of their virtues, the weaknesses of their strengths. America's strengths have resided in our long history of hard work, the great emphasis on individual reliance accompanying the process, and the uniquely favorable natural and historical context within which it all took place. Not just the technology, goods, capital, markets and people available to us from the rest of the world eased our development; we were much prompted also by the political and economic ideas of Europe. Perhaps the most noteworthy defect of our growth is that it has been too easy. It was too easy for individuals to become well off, or even rich; too easy for Americans and for America to make it. As we made it, we naturally gave credit to institutions and to individual qualities that were able to work well, or at all, in critical part only because of the favorable context within which they functioned. We mistook good fortune for a kind of shrewd native genius—a genius, we thought, that enabled us to make capitalism work in a way that nobody else could match. We have been able to find the cause of individual well-being in personal virtue, and of individual suffering in character deficiency. And, of great relevance for our present agony, our perspectives on war are much shaped by our never having suffered military defeat. War is something our side always wins; one consequence of that, as a friend has put it, is that "Americans don't hate war enough."

There is, of course, more to be said; suffice it to say that out of our history—a history of hellbent money-making without noticeably severe consequences—we have developed a social outlook. It is an almost frivolous outlook that has made us seem charming to others in the past. We have allowed ourselves to believe that the existence of genuinely serious, highly complex and deep-seated social problems is scarcely to be believed in; as a corollary, we act as though problems both arise and can be resolved in the short run, with appropriately modest policies. Faced with the legacy of centuries of slavery and racism, we congratulate ourselves on a few pieces of disgracefully limited legislation, and are undisguisedly horrified (or angry; or, some of us, pleased) when the principal product is a rise in bitterness and hostility, and a worsening of the problem. As is our wont, we find the culprit not in our shortcomings but in those who point to our shortcomings. We appropriate a few billions for a war on poverty, allow the program (except in its figureheads) to be run by local politicans, business firms and tired social workers who possess neither the attitudes, the ability nor the morale required for the task of even partial social reconstruction—who, indeed, have done

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much to create the problem as it now stands—and nod our heads in solemn sorrow when we hear that the money has gone to waste, that the program peters out. (But we barely murmur when the costs of our military folly rise to ten times that amount for a ruthless, witless, suicidal war.) We spend a few billion dollars over the years, presumably to aid the economic development of poor nations, and recoil in disbelief as conditions continue to deteriorate in the recipient countries (and they are, to boot, ungrateful). We send, at first, some thousands of soldiers, and later some hundreds of thousands, to Vietnam, and puzzle over a quite satisfactory arithmetic of slaughter that somehow fails to turn the trick.

In sum, we find ourselves shocked, disappointed, horrified and puzzled, as we face problems that seem intractable, that defy American-style solutions. The world, we are almost prepared to believe—perhaps, as LBJ once said, because "they weren't reared like us"—is not American. Nor, it seems, is much of America.

It seems, indeed, that we have outrun our luck. We gained strength and power almost effortlessly; in doing so, we left behind the world in which that power was gained, whether at home or abroad. "There is no failure," a British economist attempting to explain British stagnation once said, "like success." "Whatever is," said Veblen, "is wrong." Both meant to suggest that the techniques employed to climb a ladder are not those needed to keep one well situated at the top. For Americans to accept the need for deliberate change implied by those views would be for them to accept something else: We are not unique.

We could be; indeed, it appears that we shall have to be, to survive as a decent society. History is littered with the wreckage of societies that were the Americas of their day—whether Greek, or Roman, or Florentine or Spanish—societies that took to themselves that arrogance of wealth and power that is now ours. But those societies, it can and must be said, faced neither the challenges nor the possibilities that America faces today. Neither their professed aims nor their economic strength gave them the responsibility or the power that we hold. The turbulence that roils the waters of America comes not because there are new elements walking the earth: poverty, violence, indignity. The turbulence is a product of an underwater volcano that combines need, aspiration and a sense of the possible with the stated aims and obvious capabilities of America to weaken the hold of ancient evils over the conditions of man. It is too late for us to shut up; we must put up or blow up.

When the protest against the war in Vietnam was in its early stages, Hans Morgenthau wrote that he was less fearful of what would happen if America were to lose than if it were to win that war—because of what would become of us while and after we won. In that fear, he was quite justified. But the question remains: How did America allow itself to become involved in the war in the first place? This is not the place to recite the history of our involvement; it is enough to say that it goes back at least fifteen years. But it is not enough to say that Americans didn't know about it; any more than it is enough to say that white Americans didn't know about the condition of Negroes in America until 1954 or 1960. That some Americans knew about both conditions is to say that most Americans who chose to could have known; that we did not choose is more significant than our ignorance.

It is not reaching egregiously far afield here to point to the Good Germans of the twenties, and to their society. That society, it is now conveniently forgotten, was in the late twenties considered to be an entirely marvelous place. Scientists, painters, writers, dramatists, architects, engineers, film makers, political scientists, economists—or just plain swingers—flocked to that Germany. It was, between 1925 and 1930, something like a Mecca for the priests and worshipers of the dazzling 20th century—much as America was to become later. Less than a decade later, one needs no reminding, Germany was the cesspool of Western civilization.

America is not Germany; there are many ways in which it is not. But it is important for Good Americans to wonder what the Good Germans were doing in the late twenties. (We know what the Bad Germans were doing.)

Some Good Germans were, as they long had been, conscious of the monster struggling to break through the crust of their civilization. They wrote books, articles, plays, sermons, lectures and political speeches to their fellow citizens, and to the world. Most Good Germans, we may believe, were partaking of the splendors of Germany, and hoping for the best. Many, certainly, were not entirely sure that what was struggling beneath the surface was in fact a monster. It looked and sounded like a monster, but perhaps that was because of the way it had been raised; it could be tamed. Germany, after all, did deserve a place in the sun; Versailles did have to be corrected (peacefully, one hoped); it was, in any event, better not to rouse the ire of the beast by arguing with it.

It must be said, too, that to call a monster by its name even in that splendid Germany was already to run certain risks—of seeming to be unpatriotic, of being taken for a Jew or a Communist, of seeming to be vulgar, a troublemaker, of becoming, at least, unpopular. It came to pass that the Good Germans disappeared from, or in, Germany—by emigration, imprisonment, silence, death or by becoming, finally, Bad Germans.

The lesson of the Good German, like any lesson from another time and place, can be no more than suggestive; but is it not at least that? A Good American cannot really emigrate. He can, of course, stay silent and hope for the best. He then distinguishes himself from the Bad Americans only by feelings of self-righteousness and superiority, mixed, perhaps, with guilt. Like the Good Germans.

Is there no other way for us, today? There are other ways, but they all require confrontation with oneself, and with one's society.

The first step is to recognize our individual powerlessness, as matters now stand; to recognize that as American citizens we exercise few if any significant choices about the condition of our lives, or the lives of others for whom we profess to be concerned. We must confront the location and the uses of power if we are to understand and free ourselves from our powerlessness, and that entails discarding the easy myths—about our econ-

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omy, our politics, our social style—the myths that comfort us in our powerlessness. We must relearn to value integrity above appearances, to care about the condition of our self more than the condition of our car—and that means, because of the idealistic way in which we have been raised, to care a great deal about the condition of man in general, and to do so seriously. In turn, that means taking the plight of others as our own plight; among other things, it means ceasing to feel guilty and to feel instead a sense of responsibility. Guilt leads to feckless charity; responsibility ordinarily leads to involvement, and the latter to heightened awareness. We must care considerably more, it should be said, that some people are called "nigger" than that we are called "good guy," even if that means being unpleasant to some of those we call our friends. We must relearn, as much as we can, our nation's history, to understand what we were and are from the point of view of our victims.

All this sounds too much, yet it is far too little. What the individual does within himself will build his character, but it will not change his society much; and our society requires much change. We must seek new ways to organize, develop new programs around which to organize, and work with and induce others to do likewise. We must not allow ourselves to be debilitated by the widespread preconception that for something to be worth doing in politics it must clearly promise success (or profit, or a merit badge). "Success" can be had by working within the respectable political organizations, but it is the success of reworking the *status quo*. Those organizations, whether national or local, have for many years said all the right things. The best possible light in which to cast their failure, the failure of America, is to recognize that at their very best the major political groups work for limited reforms in a limited way, and that limited reforms are doomed to fail both because they are limited and because they are reforms. As reforms they are resisted; and because they are limited they are resisted successfully. They are absorbed by the system.

That system, political, economic and social, is named industrial capitalism. Let us assume that it worked wonders in the past. But the wonders it worked were wonders of production, which rose so rapidly and spread so widely that it did in fact seem that political and social problems would disappear soon. The productive wonders of our society have recently been so great as to put to shame our economic accomplishments of the past. Are there careful students of contemporary American society who can still believe that our political and social problems are susceptible to improvement by sheer economic success?

It should be clear, rather, that the social priorities of industrial capitalism have now become dangerous to the possibilities of civilization. To achieve high GNPs in our economy is a relatively simple task; to achieve social balance and decency under the best of conditions would be immensely difficult. We can no longer afford to be mesmerized by a social philosophy that leaves to grace and good luck what only creative and determined hard work might achieve. America's problems, at home and abroad, are deepening and broadening. They are rooted to the economic, political and social structure and outlooks of our society—indeed of Western civilization. It is not enough to hope for the best; to wait for Bobby.

"We must," as Lincoln declared, "disenthrall ourselves." We must set forth a new declaration of independence—to be free from hypocrisy and sham and acquiescence in a foul world, free to work for a new version of first things, a definition that puts man and his condition at the center of our thoughts and of our deeds. If we do so, as we do so, we shall find that young and old, black and white, poor and not so poor, are possessed of marvelous energies and constructive ideas, that we all have a morale and a character we have not dared to ponder—that *America!* can once more make ourselves, and much of the world, shiver with delight.

2. Vietnam Is No Mistake

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Three current myths, widely held even among critics of the war in Vietnam, vitiate any effort to build popular support for new and more moderate foreign policies. The first myth holds that the continual escalation of the war by the Johnson Administration stems from the fundamental misconception that the Vietnamese crisis originated outside the South, that is, in Hanoi or, possibly, Peking. Because of this misconception, the myth concludes, events themselves will frustrate the policy, educate the policy makers and thus create, ultimately, the basis for an end to the war. Myth number two, which frequently shares billing with the first, portrays American foreign policy as containment. In this view, our policy is a minimal one, aimed merely at containing China (or communism or whatever) until Peking gives up its expansionist propensities and learns to live in peace and harmony with the rest of the world. The third myth is the most dangerous of all. It asserts that United States foreign policy can and must be understood as an attempt to maintain a balance of power with the Communist world.

None of these is even faintly true. Contrary to myth number one, and as press reports amply demonstrate, responsible United States policy makers, far from being chagrined by the growing folly of the war, are delighted at what they consider its outstanding success to date. As for myth number two, American policy is not aimed at containing the power of China, of the Soviet Union, of the various Communist movements; it aims instead at crippling that power, at rolling it back and, where possible, destroying it. And the third myth invokes a balance

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of power that does not, and cannot, exist in the world today. America has no power rival in any part of the world. By contrast, the Soviet Union is at best a regional power and, in Washington's estimate, a second-line power at that.

We should not be surprised that Washington is happy with the progress of the Vietnamese War. Although its war policies have been partially rebuked by the American electorate and wholly stalemated by the Vietnamese enemy, the Administration has three very good reasons for celebration.

¶ Notwithstanding the oft-voiced expectations of the critics that escalation of the war would drive China and the Soviet Union into each other's arms, the Vietnamese crisis has aggravated their differences almost to the breaking point. Since it is a major aim of Administration policy to keep its enemies divided, the Vietnamese War has on this count been an exemplary success.

¶ Moscow's inability to aid its beleaguered ally in Hanoi other than by modest shipments of arms and munitions has taught the East European states how much Soviet protection is worth. Accordingly, the escalation, again refuting the critics, has contributed to loosening still further Soviet influence in Eastern Europe.

¶ By polarizing Communist and non-Communist positions in the Far East, escalation has led to a stiffening of will on the part of the non-Communists, especially in Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. Similarly, the escalation has helped foster internal convulsions in China, with the result that the Japanese and Korean Communist Parties have defected from the Maoist "line." U.S. policy in Vietnam has thus contributed to the increasing isolation of China in the Far East.

The first point is true and, purely as policy, it is also unexceptionable. Any foreign office placed in the position of Mr. Rusk's State Department would try to divide the Soviet Union and China. But pressing the question further begins to reveal what is peculiar about U.S. policy in this instance. One notes immediately that it has little to do with Vietnam itself. There is good reason to believe that policy makers in Washington, whatever their views may have been in the past, now realize that the Vietnamese War stems from long-term disputes among various Vietnamese political factions, and that the role of China, as of the international Communist movements, has been distinctly ancillary. More even than that, I am persuaded that Administration leaders know how to negotiate an end to the war on relatively favorable terms, and may even do so well prior to the 1968 elections. First, however, they want to exploit still further the differences between Moscow and Peking, and this prescribes that the war continue. We are confronted here with great-power politics of the most conventional—and ruthless—kind. The Administration is quite consciously destroying Vietnam and its people in order to gain a marginal advantage elsewhere. This is a rational choice, not a mistake or a miscalculation.

The significance of this choice should be dwelt upon. Even granting, for argument's sake, the desirability of a Soviet-Chinese split, we must ask why Administration leaders use war to accomplish it. Both the Soviets and the Chinese have made it known that they strongly desire foreign credits as well as increased trade. In addition, China must import much of its grain supply. A clever trade policy on Washington's part, forcing the Soviets and Chinese to compete with each other for substantial trade advantages, would likely exacerbate their relations quite as much as a war in Vietnam. Supposing this trade strategy effective, the United States would have not one enemy, China, or two, China and Russia, but none, while its major rivals would still be divided. But Washington has not chosen this course. Why?

The answer to this question is to be found in an analysis of myth number two—that is, in what poses as a policy of containment. The Administration is not trying to contain China and the Soviet Union; it is trying to reduce them further to the status of second-line powers. Holding the Soviet case in abeyance for the moment, consider China. How can one speak of the need to contain China when in fact it is not expanding? Two critical examples demonstrate the truth of this assertion.

In 1954, both North Korea and North Vietnam could reasonably be considered Chinese satellites. China had paid dearly for this influence: it fought a major conventional war in Korea, and only narrowly avoided a nuclear attack in 1953 for its efforts there; it risked a similar attack a year later as a result of its assistance to the Vietminh. The strategic location of these small nations on China's sensitive borders and their inflammable rivalries with American-supported South Korea and South Vietnam, respectively, should have guaranteed that an "expansionist" Chinese foreign office, still more its "aggressive" Communist Party, would maintain them as puppets. Nothing like that happened. Both Pyongyang and Hanoi have long since gravitated out of the Chinese orbit. Both have long pursued independent foreign policies; in both, the Communist Parties have long since been able to pick and choose among the competing views of the Communist world.

China has not been expanding—not against Japan, not against Burma and Pakistan, not even against India (and, since the late fifties, not even against Quemoy). Shrouded in truculent rhetoric, Peking's foreign policies have shown a basically moderate—even isolationist—character. But the United States has not been satisfied. Secretary Rusk and his associates want not a static Chinese international position but a declining one. They tell us this themselves when they point with satisfaction to China's growing isolation and offer it as one of the reasons to be satisfied by the course of the Vietnamese War.

A similar analysis may be made of Russia and the East European situation. Again, by their own testimony, American officials are not satisfied merely with the thaw in Eastern Europe, which was already far advanced before Soviet weaknesses were exposed in Vietnam. The war in Vietnam is a good war, in their eyes, because it exposes Soviet military weaknesses vis-à-vis the United States, and thereby encourages the East European states to make separate arrangements with Washington or its chief ally in Europe, West Germany. The Administration probably assigns no very high priority to this objective, certainly not the priority given to rolling back Chinese influence in Asia. Nonetheless, one must recognize here a milder

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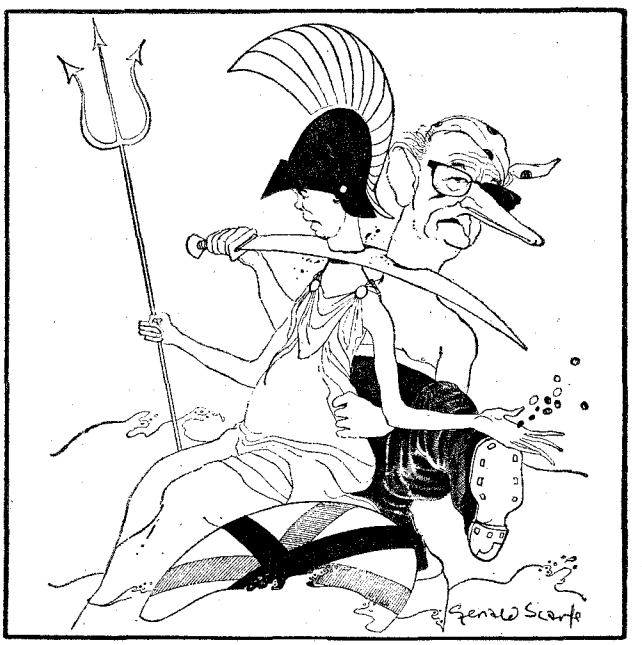
form of the old "roll back the iron curtain" policy that John Foster Dulles tried to pursue until the development of Soviet ICBMs in 1957 forced the Eisenhower administration to seek a *détente*.

The Johnson Administration, under its chief foreign policy theorist, Walt Whitman Rostow, has developed a new rollback policy, less crude and less bombastic than that of Secretary Dulles, but still a rollback policy and not less dangerous for being more oblique. Administration officials would deny the charge if made in these words. But, at the operating level, they accept as concrete foreign policy values, worth our bitter sacrifices in Vietnam, a systematic rollback of Soviet and, especially, Chinese influence.

That is the chief significance of the policies of counterinsurgency which grew out of the fall of Batista in Cuba in the late fifties, and which have gained such impetus from the Vietnamese War. In W.W. Rostow's still-classic presentation of the objectives of military counterinsurgency operations, given at Fort Bragg in 1961, he strongly emphasizes that a successful counterinsurgency strategy must begin long before native dissidents are ready for—or even thinking of—guerrilla warfare. Why then mount military operations against them? In Rostow's view, the answer is very simple. Native dissidents represent, at the very least, a latent Soviet or Chinese influence. Because of this, and for no other reason in Rostow's view, they must be destroyed. Counterinsurgency policy demands that America first must *expand* its influence in the underdeveloped world and, second, that it must use that influence to mount an *offensive* against Moscow's or Peking's "allies" there. From this standpoint it is not a strategy of containment (or of peaceful coexistence) since its defined objective is the diminution of Sino-Soviet influence by military means. In short, the logic of counterinsurgency has the logic of rollback built right in.

This brings up the third and critical myth, the myth that American policy is to be understood within the framework of conventional balance of power analysis. There is no balance of power in the world and perhaps never in modern history has the world been so distant from one. American power—military, economic, technical, political—stands at heights beyond the reach not only of its enemies separately but of the whole world together. Certainly the statement is noncontroversial if we exclude the Soviet Union. But what of the Soviets? Have they not the power to deter America in the international arena? To understand the answer to this question one must turn to one of the great disasters of our era, President Kennedy's victory in the Cuban missile crisis.

It is no quarrel with the necessity of President Kennedy's actions to call his victory a disaster. Yet it was in November, 1962, that the seeds of the rollback policy were sown. Ever since Hiroshima, Secretaries of Defense (as well as Presidents) have recited the familiar litany of America's destructive power—a power, they claimed, which dwarfed that of the Soviet Union and its allies. Until 1957, American officials really believed in the predominance of our power; accordingly, Dulles, like Acheson before him, could toy with the idea of a rollback policy. With the advent of the Soviet ICBM in 1957 the power equation seemed to change, and for several years there was serious concern in Washington, evidenced by military sniping at President Eisenhower, and culminating in the missile-gap controversy, that we had no such advantage over the Soviets. When President Kennedy won office on a pledge to restore American power in the world we should have taken that pledge seriously. JFK immediately added $6.5 billion to Eisenhower's last military budget. Later, his own first military (and space) budget exceeded Eisenhower's last by almost 50 per cent. But in spite of the impressive military build-up (unmatched by the Soviets) these fantastic expenditures represented, the Kennedy administration seemed at first unaware that it had broken through into a military position which promised relative freedom of action in the world.



Scarfe, Daily Mail (London): Ben Roth

But continued official belief in the "balance of terror" ended with the Cuban missile crisis. As Washington understood the result, the Soviets backed down. Faced with the prospect of testing the power implicit in the Kennedy rearmament program (which was not even at that time fully completed), Moscow turned away. It is not necessary to argue here whether or not this was indeed the significance of what happened. The important point is that Washington so interpreted it, and still does.

President Kennedy's victory in the Cuban missile crisis was a disaster because it persuaded high government figures that we had no serious rival, that when push came to shove, there was only one international superpower. Russian core interests did not extend to war over Cuba; the Soviet Union was only a regional power. Thus it followed that, provided Russia's regional interests were not directly threatened, the United States had a free hand elsewhere. It is now evident that elsewhere included North Vietnam. Was it an accident of timing that the Administration began bombing North Vietnam while Premier Kosygin was visiting Hanoi? Though our information on the attack is as yet incomplete, it may well have been intended as a sharp reminder to the Russians that they

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had neither the means nor the interest to involve themselves in a major conflict with the United States in the Far East. The Johnson Administration has learned the lesson of 1962 only too well. The bombing JFK was afraid to risk in Cuba in 1962, LBJ may risk with impunity in North Vietnam today.

To analyze our policies in Vietnam and elsewhere is also to diagnose their source and thereby to suggest, if only implicitly, the counter responses which are appropriate. Those who accept the three myths are inevitably placed in a position of arguing that in some fundamental sense only stupidity, ignorance—for some, neurosis—stand between current policy and a better, somewhat more humane and peaceful future. To accept such a conclusion is to be arrogant, abusive, unhistorical and, worse, ineffectual. The plain fact is that our current policy is led by able and determined men with coherent—if disagreeable—conceptions of the vast opportunities open to America's unchecked power, and the conscious will to use arbitrary force to achieve their ends. Accordingly, the appropriate response is not to educate them, enlighten them, psychoanalyze them, or even abuse them. Those who oppose them must begin instead to devise serious strategies for replacing them and, more important, the institutions and doctrines which have shaped them. These, the real villains of the piece, include bipartisan foreign policy, Executive supremacy in foreign affairs, Congressional generosity to Defense and Space, the imperial mechanisms of foreign aid, the militarism of our civilian leadership, the doctrine of America's special responsibility for world leadership. It will be difficult to carry out a dramatic change in all those areas, but that program offers the only realistic alternative to the thirty-year series of "little wars" which Secretary McNamara, the Bundys and the Rostows so willfully predict.

CALIFORNIA REVOLUTION 3

THE SOIL BENEATH THE BLACKTOP

RICHARD G. LILLARD

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Ever since that fateful publicity event, the gold rush, California ranching and agriculture have been special marvels. Whether expanding to grandiose proportions or contracting because of unusual disasters, they have been a conditioning part of the exceptional, imagination-catching role of California. The good earth of the spacious Golden State, graced by the only areas of Mediterranean climate in the United States, has enabled California to be the leader of innovations in crops and marketing, in labor relations and in automation. The state is also a leader in obliterating the best soils and in devising projects to rescue them and keep them in production.

Commercial growing in California has been tied to the unparalleled variety of local climates and soils in the plains and valleys and mountains, from the fog-cooled coasts to the hot, wind-swept interior deserts. It is related to the limited and irregular natural water supply and the long, dry summers, which have led men to carry out extraordinary water works, pumping dry the earth's crust and creating the longest rivers in the known geological history of the state.

A century ago the problem for California agriculture was the distance between its orchards and fields and the consuming population back East. The solution was transcontinental railroads and, later, trucks and airplanes. Now the problem is that too many millions of Californians spill from the cities onto good farming land. The solution, up to now, has been to bulldoze the farm and import food from distant states to the east.

Though the population burgeons its millions more per decade and becomes increasingly a market for the state's produce, fewer and fewer citizens are willing to pick crops under traditional California conditions. As a result, California farm workers now lead America in trying to upgrade their lives, and farm owners lead America in trying to replace workers with machinery.

Nowhere have non-Southern farmers more abused workers or resisted attempts to improve working conditions; yet nowhere else have farmers been quicker to run to federal and state agricultural agencies, especially the state university, to get socialized help in solving every sort of problem except the "labor problem."

In its way, California agriculture has made radical breaks with the past. Though farmers have been Republicans, and ever ready to rally to the cause of free enterprise, they have since the 1890s set precedents in forming cooperative water and irrigation systems and weather-predicting agencies. They have created scores of large and efficient cooperative marketing associations, dominated by the big growers and backed by state and federal laws on controlled marketing. Walnut growers made the trademark "Diamond" famous. Raisin growers established their "Sun Maid," and avocado raisers gave "Calavo" to the retail world. Prune and apricot people likewise pooled their efforts, as did almond growers, cattlemen and others. The lemon and orange growers' exchanges merged into California Fruit Growers Exchange and later Sunkist Growers, Inc.; now the Sunkist teletype systems span the United States and Canada and link the principal markets of the globe.

During the first century of statehood California's agriculture was a biological triumph. Early explorers of the coasts and river valleys—Portola, Anza, Vancouver

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—saw much sand and rock, much seared grass and dry plain. But after heavy-eating gold seekers created a local consumers' market and the long railroads opened up the continent, Californians turned square miles of nondescript bottom and foothill land into cattle or sheep ranches, grain and vegetable fields, and vineyards and orchards. Scattered over a distance of 900 miles, favored spots became oases of almonds, figs, apricots, cherries, prunes, peaches, hops, oranges, lemons, English walnuts, celery, lettuce, wheat, barley, alfalfa, wine grapes. Individuals and government agents experimented endlessly with imported livestock, including camels and ostriches, and with plants from all the green continents.

There have been notable successes in adapting plants and their environment to each other, as, for example, dates, grapefruit and winter vegetables near Palm Springs; alfalfa, cantaloupe and cattle feeding in the Imperial Valley; apple orchards along the coast near Monterey, Easter lilies along the extreme northwest coast, or rice on the hot plains alongside the upper Sacramento River. California developed the world capitals for lima beans, asparagus, figs and raisins, avocados. Portions of four Southern California counties became the Orange Empire. Coastal valleys produced more than half of the world's flower seeds.

This gigantic task in landscape architecture took place largely between 1870 and 1940. It turned entire flatland vistas, the flanks of long ranges, and vast blanched desert slopes into carefully tended open space. It was beautiful and enchanting; in the blossom seasons it was as fragrant as later it was profitable. Far from destroying natural beauty, most farmers had improved upon the original brush, flood plains and willow bottoms.

California, a leading commercial and industrial state, has balanced its economy by also being the leading agricultural state in value and variety of production. It grows commercially more than 200 crops, and ranks first in forty-three of them. The Experiment Station Extension Service calmly claims that California "productivity and variety [have] never been matched anywhere in the world's history."

In order to protect this gigantic "agribusiness," California guards its border like a military state, inspecting cars and trucks for pests. Inside the state, farmers and their advisers carry on a multifold biological, mechanical and chemical war against more than 100 species of insects and mites (most of them as exotic as the crops they infest), plus many fungi and viruses, as well as gophers. In the 19th century, Californians pioneered in the use of benign insects to prey on harmful insects, as when they imported an Australian ladybird beetle to control the citrus-loving mealy bug. The more recent chemical war on pests, largely successful, though speeding up the evolution of resistant strains, is also highly effective in killing beneficial insects like bees, harmless birds, other wildlife and perhaps—slowly—human beings. The result, as Rachel Carson pointed out with California examples in *Silent Spring*, is a "web of death."

California is now also the country's leading automobile state, and the car is a special threat to its crops. Increasingly since around 1944, fumes from crankcases and exhaust pipes have created smog on sunny days, damaging alfalfa, cotton and grapes. In twenty years some ten different crops were driven out of the Los Angeles area. Spinach was the first to go, its leaves spoiled by brown spots and by bronzing or silvering on the lower sides. The same happened to celery, beets, mustard leaves, romaine lettuce and other edible greens. Farmers, themselves prodigal users of cars and other gasoline-powered machines, face the prospect of joining the incipient revolt against the internal combustion engine.

In pilot social reform as in sheer gigantism of production, California agriculture is also showing the way. Growers now confront an economic revolution that they have long tried to prevent or delay. There is an unprecedented push to unionize hands in field and orchard and in packing sheds. After a century, farmers can foresee an end to their variation on the hacienda system of old Mexico. California's specialized farms have needed extra labor only during certain seasons. Since workers could not stay all year for a few months' work, they became migrants, falling into an itinerant annual cycle of subservience and exploitation, rootlessness and misery.

After World War II, the *bracero* program, negotiated with Mexico, gave imported workers a basic and guaranteed standard of living and earning. Native workers did not come under this protection, and now that ethical and economic pressures have ended the *bracero* system, the archaic farm workers system is also ending. Professional farm workers, often Americans with Spanish names and Mexican or Filipino faces, are organizing, evolving to a new level of self-respect and of national concern.

The center of this movement for more than a year has been Delano, a small town in the lower San Joaquin Valley, where grape pickers went on strike in September, 1965. Their leader was a native American, Cesar Chavez, director of the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). Backed by other AFL-CIO unions, by religious groups and liberals, opposed by millionaire owners and their small-town henchmen, the strike attracted international attention in the press and celebrated itself in a narrative account called *Huelga*. It ran a credit union, published a magazine, and supported a gay slapstick satirical troupe that put on skits in Spanish about landlords and the workers' problems.

Despite competition from the Teamsters' union, the NFWA astonished many when it signed an agreement with vineyards controlled by Schenley and won bargaining elections with the tough, recalcitrant, union-hating (but Teamster-preferring) Di Giorgio Corporation at ranches in Delano and Arvin.

Related to the development of farm workers' unions —making them possible and also perhaps making both unions and workers largely obsolete—is the new drive to mechanize agriculture. The machines invented to replace workers are designed at several branches of the University of California and in the shops of private engineers like those employed by Sunkist. Since their market at first is only in California, they do not attract national firms. They are manufactured by alert, small California firms such as Blackwelder of Rio Vista, Cochrane of Salinas, and Handling Equipment of Torrance.

The present technical development goes far beyond

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the earlier Eastern inventions for harvesting grains and the early California concern with machines to level and work farm soils and to cut drainage or irrigation systems. The California challenge to engineers has not been hay or barley or cotton but specialties like carrots, melons, dates, lemons, celery, bell peppers and oranges that take relatively huge amounts of hand labor. As this labor has become scarce or expensive or firmly self-respecting, the interlocking United States Department of Agriculture, California State Department of Agriculture and the university have set to work redesigning crops and inventing machinery to harvest them. Men are at work breeding asparagus, grapes, melons, even sesame seed that can be machine harvested. Tomato plants, the result of computer-controlled genetic breeding, have fruits of the same size, conveniently shaped, mostly ripening at the same time, and allegedly tasting like tomatoes; they can be picked all at once by a machine that pulls up the plant. Lettuce pickers that move as fast as a man can walk are equipped with pressure sensors to feel if a head is ready to pick, memory devices and automatic knives to cut the stem. A cucumber machine carries pickers who ride stretched out on their stomachs above the equally prostrate vines.

To facilitate harvesting, fig, apple, peach and lemon orchards have been pruned with low flat "plateau" tops, and costs of picking may soon lead to clipping the shapely rounded tops of orange trees to the dead level of butch haircuts. Indeed, citrus fruits, first and most famous of the California orchard bonanzas, have undergone the longest studies. These began in the 1890s with mechanical sorting, and have since included fruit washers, bulk handling in the orchard, natural coloring of fruits by use of ethylene, trade-marking directly on each fruit, orchard heating on frosty nights, and systems planning of everything from placement of trees to layout in packing houses and warehouses. Instead of climbing a ladder, the picker rides in a cockpit on the end of a boom. He uses a push button to position himself. He picks an orange and deposits it in a tube that gently drops it to a box at the bottom of the machine. Studies are under way to devise machines for shaking citrus fruit off trees into canvas catchers, or for harvesting by means of an oscillating air blast.

More serious than the weather, the insects, the labor organizers and the difficulties of mechanizing the harvest is the ominous urban growth. The very population that hungers for fresh produce threatens to crowd agriculture out of the state. At the moment, much farm activity survives only by escaping. Like the restless, ever-migrant population of California, agriculture is on the move. Whole dairies join the caravan, moving farther and farther away from the cities that use their milk and cottage cheese. Nurseries, their tons of portable trees in cans and barrels, take to the road in flight from shopping centers and apartment houses. While some crop specialties are certain to disappear, their unique soils smothered under jerry-built homes and shopping centers, other crops can make big jumps over mountain ranges to whole new watersheds.

In the old and famous parts of California, agriculture is being steadily paved or roofed over. The change in the areas surrounding Ventura and Los Angeles, San Jose and Santa Clara, Sacramento and San Diego is as visible and as significant as that from one geological epoch to another. Though minor California officials—experts—mutter now and then, there is no wide public concern over the destruction of the fertile oases of prime, unparalleled, irreplaceable land. The masses are too preoccupied with bowling alleys, race tracks and drive-in theatres to care about the soil beneath the blacktop.

After World War II, Southern California began the ever more rapid alteration of its landscape. Olives, muscat grapes, bee culture and turkey raising were already centered in Northern California; now from the broad sweep of established agriculture south of the Tehachapi Mountains, Southern California specialties began to depart for the eastern deserts or for the northern valleys, where walnuts, head lettuce, olives, celery, artichokes and dairying developed new production enclaves.

During and after World War II, as millions arrived to make ships and planes or to ride them off to the wars, the trend to put homes and factories on farmland took over in Northern California as well. This time there were fewer opportunities for agriculture to move. Though government at all levels began to tinker with zoning and planning, it made no plans for agriculture. For the building and loan companies, the mortgage companies, the big real estate operators (often Easterners), the contractors with their fleets of bulldozers and other earth-moving apparatus, the state highway engineers (who hate trees, dislike curves and shudder at the word *beauty*), and allied county supervisors and state legislators—for all those who profited from "Progress," the rancher and farmer were like the Indian of yore. They were wasters of open space. Sound investment, the needs of a forward-looking population, GNP, and other mystical phrases called for action: they turned orchards and fields, flower-seed farms, feed lots and dairy barns, range land and forests of second-growth timber into housing tracts, new towns, freeways, airfields, reservoirs, drive-in churches, department stores, amusement parks, factories, warehouses, junk yards, military camps, missile bases, golf links (themselves vulnerable to apartment house builders) and parking lots for square miles of motionless motor vehicles.

These new space users, said to be good economics, were created at a heavy cost in scenery and environment, regional flavor and local identity. The new users threatened the balance of the state's economy, for a state without agriculture is badly off. Prices of fruits, vegetables and milk went up. Flavorsome California oranges became so expensive that the oncoming generations came to prefer frozen orange concentrate, relatively tasteless, from out of state.

In the late 1950s, men began to foresee the end of agriculture in the most productive parts of California. Bulldozers were uprooting orange trees at the rate of one every fifty-five seconds. Of these, countless thousands each week were in Los Angeles County, where for a time earth-moving machinery destroyed 3,000 acres of orange orchard a day.

It was not only citrus trees that lost their hold on the

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earth. Bulldozers shoved out prime apricot orchards in Hemet Valley, chicken farms in Arcadia, hop fields in the American River bottom land near Sacramento, spinach and onions on the Santa Maria plain, lima beans in Oxnard, olive groves in San Fernando Valley, where the 2,000-acre grove at Sylmar had been "the largest single olive grove in the world." The stately palms were felled in the Indio date gardens, where soils and trees alike represented a half-century of ingenuity, to make way for motels and tracts of trailers. The big shovels ripped into avocado orchards on the hills of Fallbrook and Vista, a region designed by destiny for raising the fruit delicacy. Housing contractors, or highway builders, or both, hacked into pear orchards on fabulous soil south of Clear Lake and into grapevines of what once was "the globe's largest vineyard," an inspiring panorama on the sandy alluvial fans of Cucamonga. The slopes between Stanford University (once lovingly called "The Farm") and San Jose, which in 1940 were a modern Eden of orchards and truck gardens, got roofed over into a routine patchwork suburbia.

In 1963, California was converting 375 acres of agricultural land a day to meet the urban needs of newcomers. Most of these acres were from the one-sixth of the state that is relatively good soil. A million acres of prime soil have been lost since 1945 and many more will be lost, as things are going. A few years ago the Governor's Advisory Committee on Housing saw the population as doubling by 1980, with the state then 90 per cent urbanized. A private housing expert has predicted that in the next fifteen years Californians will build as many new houses as they built between the time of the first Spanish adobe and today.

Americans face no foreseeable famine, no shortages of calories. They can always eat wheat, corn, soy beans, beef and eggs. But they may well have to forget the delights of California oranges, table grapes, wines, walnuts, winter peas, early melons and fall raspberries. Gone perhaps will be crops that Americans grow only in California: Persian melons, avocados, persimmons, artichokes, almonds, figs, garlic, nectarines, olives, pomegranates and certain de luxe dates that grow below level near Thermal.

Grave concern over the loss of farm land to subdivisions and industrial and military uses has stimulated radical proposals for salvation—California pioneers in cures as in catastrophes. One device used by farmers to save their occupations from city people has been to incorporate their lands to form "cities"—Dairy Valley, to save milk farms, or Fremont, to save orchards. But a basic problem has been a constitutional provision that county assessors must value all land for tax purposes on the basis of "the highest and best use"—a rule that dooms a cauliflower field if a "de luxe" housing tract goes up next to it. Thanks to leapfrog and "scatteration" developments, many farmers have had their taxes suddenly spurt up above their income from the land. One Sacramento almond grower had a 2,446 per cent tax increase in one year.

In 1966, the voters passed an amendment that bases assessments and taxes for open space on actual use, not on development potential. This welcome step had been anticipated by the legislature a year before in the California Land Conservation Act, designed to create agricultural "preserves," analogous to the wilderness areas established elsewhere in the country. These are set up by contracts between farmers and local governments, with tax concessions for continuing to farm. The Act of 1965 and the Amendment of 1966 assert that California's cities should grow solid, concentrate and mature, instead of impetuously racing out on all sides, putting up buildings at random, leaving no rural sweep of scene. The laws imply that taxation is not just a way to raise money; it is also an expression of public policy.

The 1966 Amendment, if properly implemented by legislative action, will greatly help Californians to retain the nonurban landscape that still remains. The legislature will bear close watching, and this will be done by enlightened farming interests, including some big old ranches, and by new nonprofit organizations, bright, alert, properly aggressive, such as California Tomorrow, with its quarterly *Cry California*, and the Planning and Conservation League for Legislative Action, which keeps a full-time lobbyist in Sacramento.

The one overall cure for the loss of agricultural

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domain is state-wide planning, administered by a state commission as removed from monetary pressures and politics as is the state supreme court. Such a body could apply suggestions such as those in the report on open spaces made by the landscape architects firm of Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams, of whom the State Office of Planning requested "truly bold proposals." The report, full of new legal, fiscal and ideological concepts, is part of the State Development Plan, years in preparation, which considers agricultural and other open space, as well as cities, fish and game, and varied amenities. The plan goes to the new Governor early this year and gives him a chance to assure agriculture and every other broad life-sustaining value a due and permanent place under the California sun.

The program will involve the old idea, long forgotten, now revolutionary again, that private ownership of land has narrow limits, that it is only a license to use land or water surface. This license is granted by society on the understanding that certain rules are obeyed and certain fees (called taxes) are regularly paid, also provided that society does not have a higher use for the land and water. Many arrangements are possible: eminent domain proceedings, followed by restricted leasebacks; purchase by the state of certain rights; contractual arrangements prohibiting urbanization, with either the state or the individual owning the fee simple. The basic idea is that we need a new land ethic: it must become illegal to destroy beauty, violate ecology, smash history—to extinguish the natural things that give value to human life.

Anyone who views the present chaotic surface of the state may find it hard to believe that California will—soon enough—create an all-powerful state planning commission. But then it is also hard to believe that Californians will let their agriculture, like their scenery, like their clean sea water and clear atmosphere, pass into oblivion. Unless the state has changed utterly from what it was in the past, answers will come out of California as the pinch, already felt, becomes an ultimatum. The state that has led the way in crop production, cooperative selling, unionization of grape pickers, mechanization of orchards, and calculated destruction of agricultural marvels can also lead the way in planning.

California can do whatever it wants. It can use its mountains to fill in San Francisco Bay and the ocean above the continental shelf and there build more suburbs and parking lots. It can exterminate any and all species of birds, mammals and plants. Or it can restrict or ban the car, the bulldozer, the subdivider and the speculator. It can save or reconstitute much of its agriculture, as it can much of its shore line and mountain back country. Salvation is as possible as destruction.

PROPERTY TAX SCANDALS

BAD LAWS & CRAFTY ASSESSORS

MICHAEL HARRIS
Mr. Harris is on the staff of the San Francisco Chronicle.

San Francisco

A few hundred canceled checks, some astonishingly frank contracts, a wealth of confidential signed memoranda, and thousands of pages of detailed testimony have opened up a real estate tax scandal which centers for the moment in California, but whose implications spread across the country. In bribery trials held so far, three county tax assessors, two lesser assessment officials and three tax consultants have been sentenced to prison. A fourth assessor committed suicide while he was under investigation, and two deputy assessors were let off with substantial fines.

There is still no way of telling when or where the current series of trials will end. More are scheduled for this spring, and the scandal is spreading. The tax consultants whose pay-offs were revealed last year in trials in San Francisco, Oakland, Seattle and San Diego have clients also in Florida, Maine, Ohio, Illinois, New York and other states.

The tax consultant plies a quiet trade on behalf of the corporations who retain him. It is his job to try to persuade city and county assessors to reduce assessments on real estate holdings, buildings, inventories and machinery—thereby cutting his client's local tax bill. Sometimes he works on a contingent fee basis. In San Francisco, remarkably clear-cut arrangements were made for splitting the tax savings. Thus, a $20,000 tax reduction might be shared as follows: $10,000 to the client, $5,000 to the tax consultant, and $5,000 to the assessor. The State Attorney General's Office has estimated that $200 million worth of property was illegally left off the tax rolls in California.

The consultant does not always persuade by bribery. Sometimes he can convince assessors that there are valid reasons for lower assessments. Sometimes he uses the implicit threat that a company required to pay its proper share of local taxes will move to a more tolerant area. And sometimes, as tax consultant James C. Tooke observed, a local assessor fails to realize how much his help is worth and settles for a modest campaign contribution or no cash at all.

Assessor Russell L. Wolden of San Francisco had no such misconception of his value. Wolden, who succeeded his father as assessor in 1938, maintained a fully staffed country estate in a suburb south of San Francisco. His city apartment was in a building elegant enough to house also a president of the Bank of America and the board chairman of Levi Strauss & Co. The difference, as it developed in Wolden's bribery trial, was that the bank president and the manufacturer of levis paid for their apartments; Wolden was not only excused from making

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any down payment but received $37,500 in stock in the building without having to put up any investment at all.

The profession of tax consulting was almost unknown outside assessing circles when the scandal first broke eighteen months ago, and almost everyone involved in the case, from newspaper reporter to prosecutor to judge, had first to be told what a tax consultant was and what he did.

They were provided with five filing cabinets of documents to advance their education. This highly confidential material, containing canceled checks and other evidence of pay-offs, was taken on July 4, 1965, from Tooke's tax consulting office in Castro Valley, a suburb of Oakland, by Norman A. Phillips, a disgruntled employee. The next couple of weeks were devoted to negotiations, some of them tape recorded, between Phillips and Tooke for the return of the material.

For a while the secrets contained in the files appeared to be safe, but on July 16, it became my fortune, as a reporter for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, to come into possession of copies of documents listing pay-offs from a single company to a single assessor. Phillips, through incredible carelessness, had left behind the originals in a private airplane. Once the material was in the hands of a reporter, the chances for hushing up the scandal vanished.

Meanwhile, Phillips had turned for advice to John M. Thorpe, a lawyer from nearby Hayward, who recommended that the files should be turned over to law-enforcement authorities—and the quicker, the better. While Phillips was considering this, he realized that something had happened to his secret. On July 20, he therefore agreed to deliver the bulk of his documents to Thorpe's office. A small force composed of Thorpe, two of his associates, Deputy State Attorney General Marshall S. Mayer and myself worked through the night, making copies of the material. (Mayer later became the leader of a law-enforcement task force that aided in investigations throughout California, the state of Washington, in Arizona and Florida.)

Just before dawn, we trucked the five filing cabinets to a decayed Victorian mansion that we had decided to use as a temporary hiding place for the records. I then interviewed the local officials who had been named as receiving pay-offs and wrote the first of my articles. After the article appeared, the files were turned over to the Alameda County sheriff.

In the following months, the results of the scandal began to come in. Assessor A. J. Steen of King County (Seattle) and his chief aide resigned from office, pleaded guilty to bribery, and were sentenced to ten years in prison. Assessor Donald E. Feragen of Alameda County was found guilty of bribery and is now in prison. Wolden's conviction ended the forty-year regime he and his father had maintained as assessors of San Francisco. He was removed from office, but is free while his case is on appeal. Tooke, who became the star prosecution witness in the trials of the assessors, was sentenced in mid-January to six months in county jail.

The next trial holds possibilities of some interesting testimony. Tooke's former employers, New Jersey tax consultants John Desmond and Jordan Van Cleve, have been under indictment in San Diego County for a little more than a year. Even so, their firm of Dawson, Desmond and Van Cleve has managed to remain busy.

I saw both of them last September in Toronto, where they maintained their traditional "hospitality" suite at the annual convention of the International Association of Assessment Officials. Desmond said then that the scandals had cost the firm about a third of its clients. "But we have a couple of hot new accounts coming up," he said. "And we've had a tremendous reception from the assessors."

It was perfectly apparent that he was speaking accurately. He introduced me to assessment officials from all over the country who were willing to stop by and have a drink or two with their friends at Dawson, Desmond and Van Cleve. Some of the assessors asked if Assessor Philip E. Watson of Los Angeles was secretly under investigation. He was indicted two months later, has denied the charges, and will stand trial.

The investigation spread to Arizona, where the State Tax Commission reported wild inconsistencies in assessment practices. For example, a jackass in Mohave County is assessed at $100, while jackasses in Navajo County are valued at only $2.15 apiece. In Cocino County the rate is $5, and no jackasses at all are reported resident in Maricopa County (Phoenix). There were more serious discrepancies, but the Arizona investigation foundered quickly because the Attorney General's Office there does not have the power of subpoena and thus cannot look at bank records or corporation files without permission of the firms under investigation.

Mayer was next called to Coral Gables, Fla., after Sheriff T. A. Buchanan of Dade County filed charges against County Assessor Rue Gewert. The sheriff said a comparison of the county's and the city's records showed that 184 firms assessed by Coral Gables were overlooked completely by Gewert. The assessor was also accused of granting deductions averaging 49 per cent in the assessments of fifty other firms.

No one has been able to provide a coherent explanation of what happened in Florida. The only thing that seems clear is that there were no heroes. Judge Henry L. Balaban, who was hearing the case, ordered both Gewert and the former Coral Gables assessor to meet with him in chambers, their lawyers being barred from the secret three-hour session. The sheriff meanwhile has been suspended on two bribery charges and Gewert has been fired—not for anything he may have done about assessments but for bugging the offices of other county officials. There is hope that a blue ribbon investigating commission that includes two professors and a leading Miami lawyer, will come up with a report that will tell Dade County residents where the assessment program now stands.

Mayer also went to Louisiana but dismissed the setup there as hopeless. The State Board of Equalization, whose membership includes Huey Long's sister, can do nothing —which is precisely what it is expected to do. The situation in Louisiana is perhaps only an exaggeration of what happens throughout the nation. Many assessment laws

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make no sense, and it would be cruel to attempt to execute them.

"If I were to enforce the law literally, I would effectively wreck the economy of our county with any year by driving out every national firm," Clifford Allen, assessor of Nashville and Davidson County in Tennessee, told me in an interview. Allen has concluded that it would be preposterous for him to obey a ninety-seven-year-old provision in the Tennessee Constitution that requires him to impose a full assessment on every bank account, stock certificate, bond and company treasury in his jurisdiction. "If we had obeyed the law this year, we would have taken $5.30 in taxes out of every $100 in the bank," Allen said. "If the money were in a 4 per cent savings account, that means that taxes would be taking every penny of interest and $1.30 besides. In effect, it would be confiscatory."

Allen said new assessment rules are needed in every state in the union. "We need to write them so a man can enforce them without doing injustice," he declared. Now assessment officials must operate outside the law and, Allen observed, "the temptations are too great."

Indeed, the decision of a new assessor literally to carry out the provisions of the California Constitution has left Sacramento in a state of shock. Dr. Irene Hickman, a 51-year-old osteopath, specialist in psychosomatic medicine and outspoken advocate of LSD, startled Sacramento's Establishment last year by defeating the incumbent assessor after producing evidence that some privately held property in the county was assessed at only 1 per cent of its market value. Her lack of experience for the job didn't trouble her; she is a long-time director and instructor in the community's Henry George School of Social Science.

The shock came when Dr. Hickman said she would carry out the state Constitution's requirement that "all property subject to taxation shall be assessed at its full cash value." This would quadruple the average assessment in the county, but Dr. Hickman said the taxpayer need not suffer because the county government, the cities and the school districts could cut their tax rates accordingly. The change would, however, cut off nearly all veterans' tax exemptions, produce a windfall of state aid for some school districts and a drought for others, and possibly result in big tax savings for the telephone company, the county's railroads and other utilities.

The state legislature, which has traditionally interpreted the plain constitutional language merely to mean that all property owners shall be treated alike, acted in the wake of the scandals last year by passing a reform bill that will require the assessing of all property at 25 per cent of its market value. But Dr. Hickman held fast: "I cannot conceive of the possibility that our state supreme court will fail to uphold the constitution," she said, "in which case all assessors will be bound by the full cash value provision."

Sacramento County counsel, John Henrich, plans to go into court to try to block Dr. Hickman. The State Board of Equalization, which is charged with seeing that all counties treat their taxpayers alike, declared its intention "to stop the damage." A key aide in Dr. Hickman's office resigned to start a recall campaign. "But there's something in the law that says I have to be in my elected office six months before a recall could be started," commented Dr. Hickman, who was appointed assessor last fall to fill a vacancy but whose elective term began the first of this year. "Isn't it a glorious situation?"

In the other fifty-seven counties of California, the changes in assessment practices that followed the scandals have been less dramatic. Investigations have been ordered in more than half the state's counties, but in most cases Mayer and his colleagues have not recommended criminal action but have proposed stringent tightening of office procedures. Examples of unequal treatment of taxpayers have been abundant, but these in themselves do not prove corruption.

A major source of trouble is the secrecy that surrounds personal property tax assessments. Such property consists not only of household goods and clothing but—much more important from the tax standpoint—of business equipment and inventory. Records showing taxes on buildings and land are open to public inspection, and it is relatively easy in most communities for a taxpayer to see whether he is being assessed on these holdings at a higher rate than his neighbors. But state law in California provides that information about a company's inventory and machinery must be treated as confidential. The desire to protect business secrets is justified, but it sets aside an area in which corruption can exist undetected. And in fact it was in this area that the tax consultants proved most active.

The sums of money were impressive. Wolden's income tax returns, introduced in the trial, showed that in a six-year period the assessor declared a gross income of $362,147. Only $152,290 of this came in the form of salary, and Deputy District Attorney Francis W. Mayer of San Francisco, prosecutor in the three-month trial, convinced the jury that nearly all of Wolden's outside income was obtained illegally.

It would be pleasant to report that the convictions of Wolden and the other figures in the present assessment scandals ended the problem, but of course they did not. The solution does not rest merely in changing from one assessor to another—though in many cases that will surely help. Studies must be made, and from these studies legislation must be written to curb the now almost autocratic sway of assessors with definite boundaries and with rules that can be obeyed without producing disaster.

Beyond that, a deeper look must be taken into the property tax itself. It remains an unpopular tax, and it is difficult to escape the conclusion that it imposes too great a burden on a considerable number of people. It is not at all unusual to find in California owners whose property taxes have more than doubled in the last five years. Some of these people are elderly and living on retirement incomes; it is easy to understand that they have often been forced to move from homes they have occupied for a lifetime.

It is even easier to find people who will not vote for the most vital local bond issues because of their objection to high taxes. No tax is liked, but the unpopularity of the property tax is deeply deserved.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Alas, Poor Bertolt Brecht!

THE PLEBEIANS REHEARSE THE UPRISING: A German Tragedy. *By Günter Grass. With an Introductory Address by the Author. Translated by Ralph Manheim. Harcourt, Brace & World. 122 pp. $4.50. Paper $1.95.*

FREDERIC EWEN

Mr. Ewen is the co-author of the dramatic version of James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man *and Thomas Mann's* The Magic Mountain. *He has written works on Schiller, Heine, and has recently completed* Bertolt Brecht—His Art, His Life and His Times *to be published this year by Citadel Press.*

Alas, poor B. B.! Ten years in his grave, and still a thorn and provocation to his critics, and fellow dramatists! Alternately used as a whipping boy, or as a rod to chastise the German Democratic Republic, he defies his detractors and his equivocal "friends" and stands today as a most influential playwright and theoretician of the drama. His name inevitably crops up: Friedrich Dürrenmatt delivers a memorial address on Friedrich Schiller, and cannot forbear naming Brecht as a challenge to the "conscience" of mankind. Günter Grass, talking on Shakespeare and centering his discussion on *Coriolanus*, also brings in Brecht, calling him a "kind of privileged court jester."

Now Grass has written a play around Brecht and the uprising of June 17, 1953, *Die Plebejer proben den Aufstand*, subtitled *A German Tragedy*. What he means is a tragedy of Germany, that traditional incapacity of Germans to make a revolution, or of their intellectuals to lead one.

The idea for *The Plebeians Rehearse the Uprising* is striking, even brilliant. It is to take a distinguished figure of world literature, whose literary commitment to the cause of the people and socialism is unquestioned, place him in a situation where that commitment is challenged by reality—and to examine how he behaves or should have behaved.

Since this is a *pièce à clef*, the principal characters in it are easily identifiable. The "Chief" or "Boss" is Brecht; Volumnia is Helene Weigel; Erwin is Brecht's lifelong theatrical associate Erich Engel; and Kosanke is Kuba, a prominent member of the Academy of Arts, here depicted as a hack mouthpiece of the government.

The time of the action is June 17, 1953. Brecht is in his theatre on the Schiffbauerdamm, about to begin a rehearsal of his version of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, the first scene of which will enact the beginnings of the revolt of the plebeians against the arrogant Roman general. The purport of the play is to demystify the hero, and show that he is a dispensable commodity. During the rehearsal, construction workers from the Stalinallee, who have left their jobs in protest against the increase of work norms ordered by the government, and the rising cost of living, come in and ask the "Boss" to support their cause with a written manifesto. Volumnia rushes in and urges Brecht to do so.

She is followed by Kosanke, who cries in a panic: "We need you. Only your name, your words can help us!" Brecht is unconvinced that German workers can ever really stage a revolution, but he sees excellent grist to his theatrical project here. Let them re-enact their uprising to the accompaniment of beer and sandwiches. The demonstrating workers now become actors on the stage, so as to supply fresh materials for Brecht's *Coriolanus*. Soon other worker delegates arrive from other parts of the country and prevail upon Brecht to write a letter to Walter Ulbricht. He does so. But it is a cynical letter, patched together from a number of Brecht's actual statements, burlesquing both the uprising and Ulbricht, and concluding with: "If this people doesn't suit you, comrade/Find one that suits you better." The outraged delegates decide to string up both Brecht and "Erwin" as traitors, but fortunately the latter has the bright idea of dissuading them by means of the celebrated parable of the belly and the "body's members" used by Menenius in Shakespeare's play. New arrivals—among them an eloquent lady hairdresser and a heroic mason—almost inspire Brecht to action, but the sound of tanks is heard, and the uprising is soon over. Kosanke appears once more, this time to demand Brecht's statement and his name, "the biggest name of all," in support of the government. Brecht writes what Volumnia calls a "pussy-footing" document of three sentences. Left alone, he muses: "Condemned to live forever with voices in my ears. You. You. I'll tell you. Do you know what you are? You, you, you're a. . . . You poor babes in the woods! Bowed down with guilt, I accuse you!"

This is Grass's Brecht: a sort of Hamlet. Aesthete with a sour conscience.

What was Grass's intent in writing this play? In attempting a historical play dealing with an important event and a notable contemporary figure (only recently deceased), Grass would seem to owe a special debt to uncovering a truth, especially one not easily available to his audience. Though, as Grass claims, certain documents have been kept under lock and key by Brecht's "heirs and his publishing house," there are some facts available west of the Berlin Wall. Such facts may not have been at hand in 1953; but they were in 1965 or 1966. If West German periodicals, such as *Der Spiegel* and the *Frankfurter Hefte* have access to them, why not Grass? In addition, there are a number of former associates and friends of Brecht, now in West Germany, to whom he might have turned: Ernst Bloch, Hans Mayer or Alfred Kantorowicz.

Now, according to these West German sources, what *are* the facts?

On the 16th of June, Brecht became aware of the threatening crisis and called upon his friend and labor expert, Jacob Walcher, for advice and information. On the following morning, he postponed a rehearsal of Strittmatter's *Katzgraben* (an important play dealing with conflicts in a farming area) in order to arrange for a discussion of the situation created by the demonstrations. He also planned a broadcast of workers' songs, but was denied access to the radio station. If we take Brecht at his own word, he was aware that the workers had justifiable grievances, and that the Communist authorities had committed serious errors in failing to anticipate and correct them, but he was also wary that such demonstrations might be turned to counterrevolutionary ends by Fascist and demagogic elements (which indeed did take place sporadically). Objective West German historians like Arnulf Baring (who is quoted frequently in the English supplement of the play) are agreed that the demonstrations were directed toward securing economic changes and improve-

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ments but not at overthrowing the government. Baring also notes that "in any case . . . the revolutionary wave was already broken before the Soviet troops marched in."

On the morning of the 17th, Brecht addressed identical letters to Walter Ulbricht, Otto Grotewohl and the Soviet Commandant, in which he affirmed his loyalty to the Communist (Socialist Unity) Party of East Germany, but also asked for a re-examination of the government's policies. Here, so far as is known, is the entire text of that letter:

> History will pay due respect to the revolutionary impatience of the Socialist Unity Party. The great discussion with the masses about the tempo of socialist construction will lead to a sifting and securing of our socialist achievements. At this moment I feel the need to express my solidarity with the Socialist Unity Party.

The Communist East German newspaper, *Neues Deutschland*, reprinted only the last sentence. (The documentary supplement of the English version of the play erroneously suggests that the entire letter quoted above was actually only the last of three paragraphs written by Brecht.)

Brecht followed the letter with a telegram to Ulbricht, in which he expressed the hope that "the provocateurs will be isolated, and their network destroyed, but that the workers who had demonstrated their justifiable grievances, will not be placed on the same footing as the provocateurs, so that the great discussion about errors committed on all sides may not break down at the start."

As for Brecht's private feelings, they are sufficiently revealed in the published poems and prose. Here he implores those in authority "to tell the truth. Not like fleeing Caesars, promising flour, but like Lenin, saying: We are lost, unless. . . ." Elsewhere he berates them for looking at reality through rose-tinted glasses. There is the satirical poem (travestied in the play) in which he refers to the circulars distributed by the Writers' Union, stating that "the people had forfeited the confidence of the government and could regain it only through redoubled work. Would it not really be simpler if the government dissolved the people and elected another one?"

But it seems to me that Grass is most offensive when he deals with Brecht's own words and thoughts. Why distort one of Brecht's most celebrated poems, "Bad Morning," written not long after the 17th, describing a nightmare in which he sees the work-torn and mangled fingers of workers, and which concludes with

> *Unwissende! schrie ich*
> *Schuldbewusst —*
>
> *You who do not know! I cried*
> *Guilt-stricken,*

and turn this into

> *You who do not know,*
> *Guilt-stricken* I accuse you?
> (My emphasis.)

What sort of understanding of Brecht could have prompted Grass to make the poet say, penitently, "We can't change Shakespeare, unless we change ourselves," no doubt a worthy sentiment, but how untrue to Brecht, who contended throughout his life that it was by "changing Shakespeare," and by changing the character of the theatre from an instrument which merely interprets life that he would be enabled to change the minds of men and their activities.

Or what suggested to Grass the absurd notion that only Brecht could save the state at that critical moment—as he makes the official Kosanke say? A West German critic benignly remarks that here one finds a "certain overestimation of the role of letters, especially in Germany. Were a revolution to break out, Germans would be the last to call on their cultural popes."

Of Brecht's courageous past, no mention, except snide references to his early nihilism.

Alas, poor Brecht! He's dead and can't reform or defend himself. There are people who cannot forgive him for not having chosen the West, so they must paint a Brecht who sold out to the East—for a theatre! Günter Grass's play will only confirm them in their projections. And that is a shame, because Grass is himself a "politicalized" writer, not unaware of the current wave of neo-Nazism in West Germany.

The play is a clever idea aborted. Ralph Manheim's translation is faithful and literate, though it sometimes attenuates Grass's deliberate coarseness.

GUNTER GRASS'S OPEN LETTER TO KURT KIESINGER

From *Die Zeit* of December 13, 1966

Dear Mr. Kiesinger:

. . . Wittingly or not, most of the fathers of my generation assisted in the crimes committed after 1933. The schism that this creates has been overcome in many German families by the fathers' admission of complicity and the sons' desire to understand. As an adult, Mr. Kiesinger, you became a member of the Nazi Party in 1933, and only the capitulation of the German forces terminated your membership.

Permit me to employ a fiction: If you were my father, I should ask you to explain your crucial decision of 1933. I should be able to understand it because the majority of the fathers of my generation lost their best years from just such wrong decisions. But suppose that you, as my father, were to ask me: "I have the opportunity to became chancellor. I am profoundly interested in politics. . . . The people support me. Shall I say yes?" Then I, as your son, would answer: "Just because you are so deeply interested in politics, because you aspire to participate in foreign affairs, you must say no. Because in that case you should know that in this country of unresolved obligations, in this divided land with no peace treaty, the chancellor cannot be a man who, once in the past, acted against reason and served evil, when those who followed reason and resisted crime perished for their stand. Propriety should prevent you from calling yourself a resistance fighter this late in the game."

You, Mr. Kiesinger, are not my father, but I hope you have a son who will thus oppose your unfortunate decision. . . .

How shall German youth oppose the old party now coming to life in the NPD if you burden the office of chancellor with your past? How shall we hold in memory the tortured, murdered resistance fighters, the dead of Auschwitz and Treblinka, if you, a fellow traveler from the past, dare to lay down the guidelines for politics today? How shall history be taught hereafter in our schools? . . . Will the pro-Stalinist Ulbricht now be able to point his finger at us? Is there no man in the SPD/CSU/CDU sufficiently unencumbered by old deeds to become chancellor? . . .

The responsibility is yours, but we shall bear the consequences and the shame.

Still respectfully,
Günter Grass

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Divided Hearts at the Wall

TWO VIEWS. *By Uwe Johnson. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. Harcourt, Brace & World. 183 pp. $4.50.*
DIVIDED HEAVEN. *By Christa Wolf. Translated by Joan Becker. Seven Seas Books (Berlin). 218 pp. $1 paper.*

DAVID CAUTE
Mr. Caute is the author, most recently, of The Left in Europe Since 1789 *(McGraw-Hill) and the novel,* The Decline of the West *(Macmillan). He is visiting professor in the Albert Schweitzer Humanities program at New York University.*

The wealthiest West German newspaper magnate is now erecting a prestigious glass skyscraper within a few yards of the Berlin Wall. From their (no doubt) sleekly decorated and superbly mechanized offices, the representatives of the free-world press will survey the wide, desolate streets of the Eastern sector, while the captive population of a satellite state will be provided with one further reminder of the enticements of the dynamic, entrepreneurial and pluralistic society from which they are forcibly separated.

Or so we are told. In reality, the situation is more complex and more ambiguous. An East German official, proudly surveying the Wall, remarked to me two years ago: freedom to choose war is no freedom. But this formula is equally inconclusive. Two weeks in East Berlin left me with a strong desire to get out—and to go back. When compared with the East, West Berlin is undoubtedly a haven of cultural freedom and experimentation, of creativity and dissent. Yet it remains a city whose gloss and glamour are artificial, a showcase bubble sustained only by a steady inpouring of American and federal money. The Eastern half of Berlin speaks for a regime which has paid for the war in full; drained by reparations, the GDR allocated its scarce resources to workers' houses, new schools and social insurance. The flood tide of refugees who forced Ulbricht to construct his Wall were certainly choosing freedom, but they were simultaneously escaping from the logical consequences of German history.

Both *Two Views* and *Divided Heaven*, one a novel from the West and the other from the East, make large efforts to wrestle with the tragic ambiguities of a divided Germany. Neither, I feel, wholly succeeds. There are superficial thematic resemblances. In *Two Views*, a West German photographer helps an East Berlin nurse to escape; in *Divided Heaven*, an East German technician defects to the West and then tries to persuade his girl to follow him. In both cases it is the impatient, individualistic male who most naturally identifies himself with the West, while the female is pictured as more passively integrated and more conditioned by her roots and by inculcated values. Uwe Johnson's Beate, a young woman increasingly alienated by the conformities, scarcities and restrictive rules of the hospital and city in which she works, nevertheless disperses only with difficulty her vision of the West as sinful and doomed. The bonds which link Christa Wolf's Rita to her native East are those that bind the fetus to the womb.

Although *Divided Heaven* is only mildly didactic, it never travels far from a familiar formula. The heroine must make her choice against and in spite of the transitionally negative features of a Socialist society in its first, formative years: acquisitive instincts, inertia, the complacency and dogmatism of party functionaries in whom harsh slogans have displaced the human dimension. The individual who, like Rita's lover Manfred, allows his private resentments and his skepticism to accumulate to the point of physical defection is depicted as a lost soul, the victim of a tragic heritage, of an original and perpetually re-emergent sin. He is seduced by the false gods which lie both within himself and to the West.

Christa Wolf is not a writer who penetrates deeply. Although she writes sensibly and her story moves along, one is again struck by the fatigued traditionalism of style and structure which stands between so much Socialist literature and real artistic achievement. Frequently *Divided Heaven* echoes the banal and trivial tone of the romantic novel: "My little brown girl, Manfred called her"; "his look made her tremble"; "she had never before seen a man's face reflected in the water beside her own." Yet there is a difference. Rita's loyal and difficult commitment to the proud and frustrated technician, Manfred, holds the attention mainly because it is rooted in a real social milieu containing its own, intelligently observed contradictions. In the Western magazine serial, the heroine's perception of the masculine universe rarely transcends a keen bourgeois preoccupation with the size of her fiancé's income and the style of expenditure which it offers her. But Rita works in a predominantly male factory brigade, turning out railroad wagons. Through her eyes and those of her co-workers we are shown, quite plausibly, the technical problems and human tensions peculiar to a centralized state economy on the German model. Novelists have always found it easy to ignore work, particularly proletarian work, which is the source of all our lives and pleasures. It is therefore hardly surprising that in the modern Socialist novel the intrusion of this theme sometimes appears gratuitious and false. Even so, the effort is rewarding.

Uwe Johnson is a novelist of an altogether superior caliber. His hero, or anti-hero, Dietbert, is a 25-year-old free-lance photographer whose values and projects extend only dimly beyond girls and cars. "In unoccupied moments, when he had done his prescribed work, even in the midst of a sales talk, or when washing shirts, he felt empty, lent himself to any distraction, hunted them

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up, sat longer than usual on the waste-paper basket in the newspaper office, slunk off to the empty afternoon shows at the movie house, readily drank with others, and occasionally noted with alarm how little effort he was making to save up for a new car." Dietbert's interest in rescuing Beate from East Berlin in the period immediately following the erection of the Wall is fitful and ambivalent.

Dietbert acts spasmodically, almost in a dream, gnawed by his conscience. "He felt personally offended by the confinement of Beate in her Berlin; he had a private anger against the forbidden zones, minefields, lines of sentries, obstacle ditches, glaring lights, barbed wire, walled-up windows, shooting orders and threats of punishment for attempting to cross." Johnson studiously averts our attention from the glossy façade of West Berlin. Dietbert moves along with his nose close to the ground, wandering in a haze through strange streets (Berlin is not his city), bars, small furnished rooms, and the disturbing appraisals of the people he encounters. Even when descending on Berlin by plane he achieves no wider sensation than that of traveling in a style which is not really his own.

The narrative prose of *Two Views* is sparse yet dense, detached yet cumulatively involved. Johnson is a distinctive writer, and one who is obviously highly conscious of his craft and of the total effect he wants to create. The mood of the novel is peculiarly modern: the two principal characters grope through their lives like submarines passing through the green sea. The people they meet and have to deal with are deliberately two-dimensional, mere circumstances, lacking that rounded completeness and the inner motivation by means of which a novelist transforms a person from object to subject. It is almost as if Johnson had accepted Robbe-Grillet's point against Balzac—that the narrator, unless he is God, cannot know everything. There is virtually no dialogue, for in the course of dialogue the singular perspective is lost and its human embodiment merges into the world as simply one man amongst others.

Like many German novelists before him, Johnson seems to say that life is inherently painful and that humanism must constantly be reborn out of dead ashes. Unlike Böll, he finds no outlet in humor; unlike Gisela Elsner, he avoids the easy retreat into expressionism and the absurd. He has none of Grass's robust, Rabelaisian power. The eye is once again a camera with a soiled lens. The small surfaces of the city are consubstantial with a bleakly restrictive and alienating environment. Life is like that. But in the West, at least, a man is free.

There are echoes not only of a literary tradition emphasizing the accidental and the absurd (Kafka, Musil) but also of the new cinematic climate which has exorcised the concern with psychological penetration and social structure of 19th-century realism. Johnson, in fact, stops well short of the mannerisms of the *nouveau roman* and nowhere surrenders himself to the fetishism of physical space and contour as practiced by Robbe-Grillet. Even so, the skeleton of a film script is visible. It is as if Berlin had become—for writers, refugees, photographers, guards and incoming movie actors alike—one vast film studio with a single, immovable prop—the Wall.

To put it this way is not to suggest any resemblance between *Two Views* on the one hand and *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* or *Funeral in Berlin* on the other. Where the foreign writer finds excellent material for sensational intrigues, hair-raising adventures and sudden death, Johnson offers instead a population that has suffered for so long on the rack of historical crisis that violence and repression are absorbed like a persistent fine dust which burns the eyes and coats the lungs.

While respecting Johnson's refusal to put his art at the service of any current myth, I confess to having been sometimes bored and irritated by this novel. The East from which Beate has to escape has no redeeming features at all; it is simply a prison and a gigantic lie. And if the choice of Dietbert is in any sense symbolic, then the West has no virtues beyond confused tolerance and opaque nihilism. The negative vision, of course, comes most easily to the artist. The laborious didacticism of so many hopeful Socialist novelists tends to drive the sensitive writer deeper into a shadowy world of fragmentation, contingency, and even despair. One does not reject this because a "brave new world" is in the process of construction in the Socialist states; one rejects it because experiences, ideas, and even moods exist and can only exist in terms of their opposites. Uwe Johnson is a novelist of integrity who steers clear of all sentimentality, but he does not fully kill the prejudice that the ultimate German alibi remains self-pity.

The Great Human Option

THE CROWD IN HISTORY: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730-1848. *By George Rudé. John Wiley & Sons. 281 pp. $5.95. Paper $2.95.*

REVOLUTIONARY EUROPE 1783-1815. *By George Rudé. Harper & Row. 350 pp. $6.95.*

EDWARD T. GARGAN

Mr. Gargan is living in Paris, on leave from the University of Wisconsin. His latest book is De Tocqueville *(Hillary House).*

Our time regards disbelief in revolution not as a tragedy but as an improvement in the human situation, as proof of our will and ability to control men and societies. In the United States there is unquestioned confidence in the professionalization of reform; in France *planification* absorbs all life, while in England, with less fervor, a similar faith dominates all public practice and philosophy. The rationality of the Western mind has found the political dogma best suited to its nature. The West has finally cast off the imaginative, the passionate, the ecstatic and the beautiful as irrelevant to the discussion of man's personality as citizen and as one in community with others. War, corrupting all passion and desire, remains the only occasion for transcending logic. The descendants of Marx wish to be faithful to the revolutionary tradition, but they have in Western Europe little of Marx's trust in revolution as the salvation of men and nations.

Contemporary political scientists and sociologists, tempted by the politics of the cold war, see revolutions primarily as sets of problems in counterinsurgency. Their studies are designed to develop effective anti-revolutionary techniques for the struggle between the temperate and equatorial zones of the world, the industrial and agrarian continents, Asia and America. The findings of these studies belong to the arcana of governments, to espionage agents, to generals. In public discussion the images remain starkly primitive. Burke's and Taine's howling masses have been transferred from historical France to modern China and Asia. Academic specialists, when not directly in the service of the state, aid this anti-revolutionary action by treating as naive all belief in revolution as a great human option. The great

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metaphysical questions on the meaning of freedom are raised by the adolescents of the Western world awkwardly fulfilling the role of the intelligentsia, while scholars and intellectuals—not daring to outrage society—content themselves with exquisite descriptions of how things function.

It is the merit of George Rudé's *Revolutionary Europe 1783-1815*, and his *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England* that he not only rejects what is false in past historical accounts of the revolution but succeeds in viewing from a new perspective the great revolutionary movement in Western history. Rudé's work also presents an excellent synthesis of the historical writing on the French Revolution that has been so plentiful since the end of the Third Republic.

The professional study of the French Revolution was initiated by the formidable French academic historians who, in the beginning of the Third Republic, and especially on the occasion of the revolution's first centenary, firmly established a "scientific" and documentary approach to the history of the revolution. Their historical outlook was framed by Europe's effort to create stable representative systems, equilibrium in the operation of finance capitalism, and to hold together a middle-class power structure threatened by Socialist dreams of a new world to be built with the revolutionary energy of Europe's wage-earning masses. The First World War ended the chances of revolutionary socialism in Western Europe and transferred this experiment outside its frontiers. But in this same period historians, inspired by Marx's social and moral vision, successfully produced new and precise accounts of Europe's revolutionary action in the years 1789 to 1800.

Georges Lefebvre, in his *Paysans du Nord de la France pendant la Révolution*, superbly exhibited the historical means to concretize the previously legendary and obscure place of the peasantry in the revolution. In 1958, Albert Soboul, the year before Lefebvre's death, traced the revolutionary role of the small shopkeepers, craftsmen and artisans in assuring the destruction of the old regime, though losing in the same period their own foothold on the slopes of history. In England, George Rudé and Richard Cobb have most successfully added to this inquiry; Cobb by his enormous study of *Les armes révolutionnaires* and Rudé in his *The Crowd in the French Revolution* and *The Crowd in History*.

Richard Cobb of Oxford, a principal reviewer of books on the French Revolution for the *Times Literary Supplement*, has recently somewhat crossly denounced new developments in the joint sociological and historical study of the revolution. He sees this approach as abstracting the human element out of unique historical situations in a preference for questionable laws of revolutionary behavior. At the conference of the French Historical Society, held at Michigan, in March, 1966, Cobb made much fun of two very young scholars attempting to analyze, with the help of computers, the hundreds upon hundreds of *cahiers* drafted before the meeting of the Estates-General in 1789. Cobb was surprised at his audience's disapproval of his style and message. Yet the tension that Cobb has aroused is fundamentally based on the serious problem of the adequate generalizations needed to give meaning to the entire revolutionary drama. Such interpretative statements are imperative to prevent the revolution from becoming a story of picturesque militant craftsmen and wage earners in place of equally romantic ugly aristocrats and egotistical bourgeoisie. Cobb fears statistics, but even more deeply he fears generalizations.

George Rudé stands somewhat in the center of the shifting field of French Revolutionary historiography. Wholly devoid of utopianism, his writings are the more convincing because of his nostalgia and affection for the class of artisan-craftsmen now vanished from our technological society. *The Crowd in History*, the more original of his two recent books, sets out to locate and cauterize the festering sores left by the literature that saw all popular manifestations as bestial and savage. Rudé examines the historical circumstances attending every crowd's formation, the size and specific activities of various crowds, their leaders, the political, economic and social identities of the members of crowds, the overt and clandestine motives of crowds in action, the response of authorities to the challenges of crowds. Masterful use is made of police records, hospital and prison reports, press and Parliamentary discussion, the diaries and correspondence of friendly and hostile witnesses.

The two basic forms of crowd activity before the impact of the industrial revolution were those developed during the rural and city riots of the 18th century. The crowds in the French Revolution followed these earlier examples and added a decisive political character. The rioting of the early 19th century both imitated the past and experimented with the kinds of popular action that would accompany the industrial revolution. Rudé, drawing on his own original research, contributes three brilliant and lucid chapters distinguishing the political riots, the food riots, and the labor disputes of the French Revolution. This has never been done so clearly, and will govern all future examination of these complicated years. He is less impressive in treating the events of 1848, but his pages on the pre-industrial demonstrations in England, the religious riots of the early 19th century, and the Chartists' demonstrations, meaningfully relate these crowds to those of the past and those to come.

The pre-industrial crowd identified by Rudé included few criminals or unemployed; the majority were craftsmen, shopkeepers, artisans, while in the country they were tenants and farm hands. Many adolescents joined the crowds, bringing their own style and energy in much the same manner as the adolescents of the American ghettos have done in recent years. Yet the average age of the *vainqueurs de la Bastille* was 34 and that of those killed and wounded in the assault of the Tuileries in 1792 was 38. Economic distress was decisive in setting the crowds in motion. Demonstrations were triggered by scarcity of food,

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inflationary prices, inadequate wages. In a time when poverty was often regarded as a criminal condition, men and women rioted to preserve their status as independent persons. The depersonalization and loss of identity suffered by the poor and destitute of the present time make clear why fear gripped the crowds of the past.

Such crowds had few contacts with the true proletariat, but they had almost no chance themselves of becoming part of the bourgeoisie, and were in fact already economically redundant. When these crowds shoved, shouted, broke things, pushed and struck out, they fought to prevent their own extinction. In the 20th century such groups have often espoused Fascist causes, while in the 18th century history encouraged them to support a more liberal political effort. Rudé insists that he does not wish to argue that short-term economic factors "eclipsed all others in this time," but he is correct in his stress because the fears released by short-term economic crises were lifetime anxieties for those facing adverse fluctuations in prices, wages and the availability of food.

As the 19th century advanced, crowds became more politically conscious. In France the early Socialist literature contributed to their political education and eventual militancy. Underlying folk myths and beliefs also fashioned the crowd. The "leveling instinct" was active, the belief that the king must be on the side of "justice," and that justice rather than market decisions should determine wages and prices, reinforced the crowds' conviction of the rightness of their actions. English rioters had some idea that the rights of Englishmen sanctioned their course. Some traces of millenarianism were present, as well as considerable religious antagonism toward those considered deviant in their orthodoxy, rival orthodoxy or unorthodoxy.

Yet great turning points are discernible in the history of the crowd. The events beginning with 1789 and the hesitant development of an independent working-class movement in the first decades of the 19th century were decisive for the history of the crowd and Europe. During the revolution, crowds acted at specific and critical moments to accomplish significant political results. The number of these decisive occasions was astonishingly few. Rudé cites as the "most important" revolutionary *journées* some thirteen events in the six years from 1789 to 1795. These important days numbered twenty-six of rioting out of a possible 2,190. A craftsman who left his bench to help out in these significant demonstrations would have lost little more than 1 per cent of the time normally spent at his work or behind the counter in his small shop. No revolutionary *journées* lasted more than five days, and most were of two days' duration. Soboul and others have suggested that physical exhaustion explains in part why the *sans-culottes* did not turn out to rescue Robespierre on 9th Thermidor. But if those called upon had participated in the last major political riot, they would not have been active since the insurrection of September 4-5, 1793, an interval of eleven months in their call to service as members of the crowd.

This historical record underscores by analogy the task and achievement of those responsible for recruiting demonstrators in the American civil rights struggle. This cause does not have, however, an ongoing bourgeois political revolution to which its forces might respond. And the civil rights *journées* have not had the impact of those in France which for a time fixed the direction of the revolution. The leaders of the contemporary fight for freedom correctly sense that a revolutionary situation may be necessary if they are to succeed. Our anti-revolutionary and a-revolutionary culture and political climate make reflection on the great revolution of the 18th century all the more significant and necessary.

Rudé's *Revolutionary Europe* expertly conveys the consensus of modern scholarship on the periodization, critical issues and consequences of the revolution. He puts at the same time his own stamp on this material, and is at his best when dealing with the activity of the *sans-culottes* in the great *journées* of 1789-95. Surprisingly, Rudé examines the old question of Napoleon's place as heir or traitor to the revolution with more objectivity and generosity than has been the practice of historians who have witnessed the tyrannies of Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini.

The collapse of the old order is seen as the result of the increasing inefficiency on the part of those who governed at a time when the bourgeoisie outside the political decision-making process pressed more and more for political power and responsibility. Rudé accepts as something almost anticlimactic the extraordinary achievement of this class and, as a consequence, he fails to explain adequately their preparation for this triumph. Not enough attention is given to how the bourgeoisie created precisely the political institutions suited to their needs, or to the means by which this class prevailed throughout all the vicissitudes of the revolution, surviving the *sans-culottes* threat, the terror, Napoleon.

The bourgeoisie not only survived but, profiting by their revolutionary education, founded the political order and society that prevailed until the First World War, and which psychologically still dominates the European spirit. One can only wish that Jean-Paul Sartre, whose *Nausea* represents the perfect anti-bourgeois spiritual statement, would write a history of the revolution. He alone has the talent and the animus to explain the tenacity and success of this class. Until that work is done from the perspective of Sartre, the best explanation of the bourgeois dominance remains that of the Marxist historian Albert Soboul. He attributes, as did Marx, the bourgeois achievement to their ownership and direction of the productive processes of the developing capitalist economy. This thesis, despite its shortcomings, is the best we have and goes a long way to explain why the *sans-culottes*, the heroes of Rudé's books, were unable to fashion the revolution in their own image.

One reason why Rudé inadequately reconstructs the historical accomplishments of the bourgeoisie is that he is determined to underestimate the contribution of the Enlightenment thought to the revolution. Rudé insists again and again that the role of the *philosophes* is "problematic," and he correctly cites

THE WINDS

I do not like the winds because
They are too like my passionate self,
I want the winds to die down and the calm
To allow me to establish myself.

It is only in the calm of early evening
I feel man's short triumphs
When by the elevation of the spirit alone
He overcomes his defiance.

It is in the improbable hour of peace
Between the rigors and riots of war
A semblance comes of a high ideal,
Glimpse of a fraction of what we are

If reality would permit us
Not to be cloudy,
If God would relieve us
And show us reality.

When the winds come they will blow
Away my pennant. I will
Lie low until they pass, and then
I will raise up the evanescent.

RICHARD EBERHART

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the occasions in which the ideas of the *philosophes* were hardly decisive. The Thermidorian reaction was more indebted to the experience of 1789 to 1794 than to the *Encyclopédie* of 1751, or Voltaire's *Candide* of 1759, or Rousseau's *Du contrat social* of 1762. But these bourgeois works formed the bourgeois expectation of history and revolution. After magnificently tracing each step in the *sans-culottes*' revolutionary activity until the fall of Robespierre and the concurrent defeat of the *sans-culottes*, Rudé dramatically introduces those who prevailed with the statement: "The Plain then emerged as the victors of Thermidor. There were idealists and ideologues among them; but on the whole, they were hard-headed men to whom the Revolution had been a profitable business. . . ." What is the historical secret of their success? Has it been transmitted to their heirs in our time? How did they develop so quickly the techniques of survival and dominance in politics, as well as in the market place? The "Plain" receives two sentences in Rudé's book and no mention in the index! Obviously the wrong side won, but how? Ours is not yet a post-bourgeois world and we must understand its secrets if history is to witness the interment of the bourgeois era in history.

Some sources of the bourgeois victory in the revolution will be found by reconsidering the place of the *philosophes* in shaping the 18th century's spirit and history. Our purest concepts of justice, of freedom, of equality, of education, of pleasure, of the possibilities of sex, of tragedy, of success, are largely those of the Enlightenment *philosophes*. Marx was assuredly their greatest successor and the major critic of their limits. But it was the achievement of the Enlightenment thinkers to make human happiness the proper matter of political discourse and the perfection of the human personality a civic rather than religious issue. The *philosophes* made the revolution possible for in the decades preceding its outbreak they created the conviction that the human situation might be refashioned through reflection and action. Through their work history lost its ancient capacity to dominate and restrict life. History became identified with opportunity; the future entered secular life. The *philosophes* announced the fallibility of all institutions and made freedom the test of any civilized polity. The *philosophes* rethought the implications of all human conduct and ethics, and the meaning of human loneliness and

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PROGRAM AND PARTICIPANTS

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Luncheon Session

Domestic Urgencies vs. Military Costs: Mayor JEROME CAVANAGH of Detroit; Rev. Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr., Nobel Peace Laureate and Chairman, Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Afternoon Sessions

How Do the Media Cover Pacific Developments?: Senator ERNEST GRUENING (Alaska), former Editor, *The Nation*; CECIL BROWN, Director of News, Community Television of Southern California; MALCOLM W. BROWNE, Pulitzer Prize winner, recent chief A.P. and A.B.C. correspondent in Vietnam. *New Priorities and New Constituencies*: SEYMOUR MELMAN, Professor of Industrial Management and Engineering, Columbia University; CAREY McWILLIAMS, Editor, *The Nation*.

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solidarity was not absent from their considerations.

Undoubtedly the bourgeois proved faithless to this inheritance; the misery, the cant, the hypocrisy of our private and public lives make this evident. Yet the meaning of the revolution in thought which preceded the revolution of aristocrats, bourgeois, *sans-culottes*, generals, remains the heart of the matter. It is to be hoped that Rudé and other historians will stop their embarrassing efforts to build a wall of separation between the thought of the Enlightenment and the economic and social course of the revolution. When the fusion of thought and action during the revolution is better understood we will comprehend again its splendor and recover its symbolic place in our lives.

Tocqueville never failed to praise and stand in awe at the extraordinary moments in the revolution when the selfishness normal to most men was put aside in the great effort to create a freer and more human condition. He saw the revolution at its most perfect hour when men possessed of common purpose and intent transcended the limits of their nature. Contemporary historical accounts often fail to capture the heroic and superhuman achievements of the revolution because our age rejects the myth and the belief in the possibility of revolt. We are best at finding out why specific groups and causes fail. The expectation of failure governs our historical imagination and our lives. Perhaps we are of this mind because we have accepted Freud's completion of the work of Nietzsche. Nietzsche announced to Western man that his God was dead, and Freud more calmly informed us that efforts to refashion the human situation through revolt were illusions. Nietzsche needed a madman to bring his news. Now the death of belief in revolution is similar news that can be uttered only by a madman. Freud's message to mankind is that expectations of consolation are infantile and neurotic, and that only the wild and foolish can still be disturbed by the loss of light which the Western revolution once introduced into society.

An 18th-Century Man

JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU. *By Jean Guéhenno. Translated from the French by John and Doreen Weightman. Vol. I: 1712-1758. 460 pp. Vol. II: 1758-1778. 316 pp. Columbia University Press. $17.50 the set.*

JEFFRY J. KAPLOW

Mr. Kaplow, an assistant professor of history at Columbia University, specializes in the history of modern France. He is the author of Elbeuf During the Revolutionary Period *(Johns Hopkins Press) and* New Perspectives on the French Revolution *(John Wiley).*

These volumes tell us all we may reasonably care to know and more about the life of Jean Jacques Rousseau. For 750 pages we follow the hero from birth to death, from first love to last, from his origins as a humble artisan to the heights of philosophic fame. He is portrayed in all his contradictory moods and tendencies, as he wandered from place to place and idea to idea, in his eternal quest for truth. Guéhenno has no trouble in convincing us that Rousseau the seeker always remained true to his essential being, and that the motto "*vitam impendere vero*" (a life submitted to truth) was for him no piece of idle rhetoric. But despite the detail and the biographer's sympathy for his subject, the book remains dissatisfying and dull. For the analysis of ideas that ought to have been the core of the book, as the ideas themselves were the core of the man, is nowhere systematically undertaken; and the historical background —indeed, the notion of history that informs the book—are both shockingly inadequate.

To say that what is essential about Rousseau is his continual striving after truth is to make of him a pure intellectual unconcerned with the problems of the world outside the ivory tower. It is to exalt process and to undervalue achievement: the results of the thought process. Furthermore, it is to postulate an absolute separation between philosophy and action, a separation which I do not think Rousseau would have found congenial. (One of the great sources of his frustration was that he could not put his ideas into execution.) Finally, this procedure makes it almost impossible to see his ideas on specific subjects as parts of a whole view of humanity and its potential. Rousseau was not a systematic philosopher, but he did orient his researches around a central theme: under what conditions might men, corrupt because living in a society based on inequality, deprived forever of the pristine purity of the state of nature, regain the freedom of action that would alone enable them to develop individually and collectively along paths of virtue and self-realization? "Man is born free, yet everywhere he is in chains." What instrument will he use to break the chains? The answer is clear: radical, egalitarian democracy.

Rousseau was no revolutionary, partly because of temperament, partly because he did not live in a revolutionary situation. Although he could counsel a friend: "Do you want to relieve your sufferings? Learn to suffer in peace, become patient and gentle; you will soon cease to feel wretched," he did not say this because he was, as Guéhenno has it, on the side of the masters. But he was a radical, an egalitarian and a democrat.

In the context of the 18th century, only a radical egalitarian could say that "man is the same in all classes; since the rich man has no bigger stomach than the poor man and is no better able to digest his food, since the master's arms are no longer or stronger than his slave's, since the great ones of the Earth are in fact no greater than ordinary people; and, lastly, since human needs are everywhere the same, the means of satisfying them ought to be equal everywhere." Only a radical could write: "I am constantly being enjoined to suggest only what is feasible. This is tantamount to saying: suggest doing what is already being done, or at least suggest a satisfactory course which can be combined with the existing evil. Such a project is, in some connections, much more illusory than my own for, in the combination of good and evil, the good is corrupted and the evil is not cured. . . ." Only a democrat could formulate a theory of reliance on the general will.

Whether as a matter of choice or because of the force of circumstance, Rousseau had a theory without practice. But this did not doom him to sterility. Neither he nor the *philosophes* changed the world, despite Guéhenno's claim to the contrary. What they did was to provide sets of ideas that might eventually be used for social analysis and political action. No man more than Rousseau has been claimed as a founding father by so many diverse schools of thought. Romantics saw him as one of their own because of his conception of nature and individual freedom, Socialists exalted him for his view of the origin of property, Jacobins hailed him as the prophet of virtue. Each in his own way was right, but all took from him only what they found appealing. The procedure is normal and no cause for regretful sighs. Rousseau was an 18th-century man

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whose ideas could not be transferred whole into any subsequent historical period. He might inspire the future, but he could not analyze it. In his pursuit of truth, and still more with the several bits of truth he thought he had found, Jean Jacques provided us with a Pandora's box of questions and insights that has yet to be emptied.

All this can be understood only if we take Rousseau away from the privacy of les Charmettes and l'Ermitage and place him in history, that is, in the society of which he was a part. This Guéhenno cannot do, for he does not know that society as he should. He speaks of Rousseau escaping from middle-class society, but I suspect that aristocratic is a more proper term. He says Montesquieu "had shown that freedom could be the result of a sober compromise between the various forces which go to make up society. But it was too late. Society was too far gone in decay to listen to his teachings: the mighty clung too tenaciously to their privileges and the weak to their grievances." But surely Montesquieu's concept of freedom was not Rousseau's, based as it was on an aristocratic constitution. What is more, the statement assumes that the contending parties, whoever they may have been, were free to deal with one another as equals, and this is clearly not the case. Perhaps this failure to see clearly the historical context is inevitable in an author who declares that "there is almost always something petty about the writing of history. Erudition is a means of helping us out of difficulties and masking our ignorance. The most learned historian can do no more than base his account on a few events, the memory of which has been preserved only by chance. He piles anecdote upon anecdote, and fills in the appropriate span of time as best he can. The essential point remains shrouded in mystery."

As in many another case, this biography tells us as much about its author as its subject. Guéhenno makes this clear when he writes that he was first drawn to Rousseau by the latter's conviction that truth alone was worth caring about. This is now unfashionable. Today, men, even righteous men, have abandoned truth, and individuals no longer matter. "Slaves claim that they have adopted the manners and morals of the masters in order not to be exploited by them. Both parties raise their voices with equal force and have recourse to the same devices in order to scream out their lies." The world is indeed a subject for anguished contemplation, but "to cultivate a certain kind of anguish is also to nourish hope." The postulated relationship between the disappearance of truth (here defined as an unchanging absolute) and the decline of individualism is vague, to say the least. But what is more important is Guéhenno's apologia for his own attitudes. What he is saying is that he has become disillusioned with the Left and sees little hope for political action of any sort in contemporary France. Everything is corrupt, seen from the inner sanctum of the Académie Française. Guéhenno, the popular front man of the thirties, was the image of the rational, clear-thinking, concerned intellectual. It is a pity that he has chosen in recent years to withdraw from the fray in order to cultivate not his garden but his anguish. Neither Rousseau nor we are the richer for that decision.

Records / Benjamin Boretz

BOULEZ: *Le Marteau sans maître.* Jeanne Deroubaix, alto; Severino Gazzelloni, alto flute; Georges van Gucht, xylorimba; Claude Ricou, vibraphone; Jean Batigne, percussion; Anton Stingl, guitar; Serge Collot, viola. Pierre Boulez, cond. Turnabout TV 4081/TV 340818.

Although the proclamation of the *Marteau sans maître* as a new *Sacre du printemps* has long since proved to be a false alarm, one can understand how it could have created an impression of this kind, and could even attract the wary attention of the composer of the real *Sacre*. For the work immediately projects a highly novel temporal, timbral and articulative atmosphere and striking individual "events" of remarkably compressed, intricate and densely articulated, but sonorously bright and lucid texture.

Soon, however, one becomes aware of a fundamental disjunction between this textural intricacy and the degree of significant connection from event to event and in the totality. Essentially, the "originality" of the phraseology proves to derive from the maximally dense juxtaposition and extension of individual parts that are themselves rather literally "Webernian," so that the evident intricacy is more external than contextual. And the special sonority of the ensemble, however striking locally, never appears to develop, and ultimately seems to derive its brilliance simply from the inherent characteristics of the all-upper-register timbral combinations (vibraphone, xylophone, alto flute, guitar, viola, alto voice, etc.) than from their compositional deployment. Thus it seems especially revealing that phrase demarcation is accomplished throughout by externally imposed pauses—one of the immediately identifying mannerisms of the work—rather than by any internal inflection generated by the ebb and flow of unfolding pitch and durational relations.

In particular, the essential externality of the idea is evident in the way the later sections progressively degenerate, running hopelessly out of ideas in the absence of any developmental implications to be drawn from preceding events; a really low inventive point is reached at the close in the introduction of the unfocused, conventionally portentous clangor of gongs as an obviously "polar" backdrop for the delicate pitch articulation of the solo alto flute.

Although one would expect Boulez's own performance to approach definitiveness, his players are evidently unable to give him any consistent representation of the dynamics printed in the score (Severino Gazzelloni's caprices are particularly glaring), and his singer simply cannot be relied upon to produce the indicated pitches, although her voice quality seems ideally lucent, flexible and unforced. On the other hand, the ensemble as a whole seems to project the textural and sonorous qualities of the work quite adequately. Although the recording is manifestly superior to Robert Craft's noble but foredoomed effort with unindoctrinated players and no preparation time, the concert performances given a few years ago by Arthur Weisberg's Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, with Bethany Beardslee as vocalist, seemed far more accurately to represent what Boulez's own notation requires.

NEW MUSIC FOR PIANO. Works by Dahl, Berger, Kennan, Adler, Overton, Babbitt, Gideon, Berkowitz, Weber, Kraft, Pisk, Powell, Gould, Fine, Hovhaness, Perle, Cazden, Prostakoff, Glanville-Hicks, Bacon, Helps, Brunswick, Kim, Alexander. Robert Helps, piano. RCA Victor LM/LSC 7042.

This album is as valuable for its representation of important aspects of American musical development that are rarely encountered in recent new-music activities as for the superior performances it contains of important works by more

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frequently heard composers. Thus Mark Brunswick, Miriam Gideon and Vivian Fine were members of a group of serious and accomplished composers who centered around Roger Sessions in the 1930s, and whose work was quite regularly performed in prewar contemporary music circles, along with that of such important younger composers as Edward Cone, whose omission from the present album is especially regrettable.

In general, these composers were influenced by Sessions' concern for the unfolding of structure through an unbroken, "long-line" continuity in which differentiations evolve out of the inflecting lines of a continuous, densely interwoven counterpoint, rather than as explicitly articulated "contrasts." The manifestations of this idea in the work of the postwar generation of Sessions-oriented composers are represented in the album by the work of Earl Kim (whose recent compositional reawakening, notable especially in the performances of his *Dead Calm* given at Marlboro and at Tanglewood last summer, has been one of the gratifying developments of the past year) and of Robert Helps himself. And Ben Weber's kind of 12-tone music, with its strongly traditional-associative, soft-textured surface, seems also to derive from this approach. (Whereas, for example, the 12-tone music of Paul Pisk stems directly from the Viennese source.)

The two aspects of "neoclassicism" that were perhaps the most powerful presences on the prewar American musical scene were associated with the work of Stravinsky and Hindemith. Of the composers in this album, Ingolf Dahl was once widely known and performed as a principal exponent of Stravinskian thought, but in the powerful backwash of Stravinsky's own reorientation he has paid the price of obscurity for his continued faithfulness to Stravinsky's earlier approach. In this connection, the absence of music by Louise Talma and Alexei Haieff who, with Dahl, Harold Shapero and Irving Fine, were the real virtuosos among the "classic-surface" Stravinskians, is really unfortunate, given the sense that its inclusion would have provided of the range, nature and prevalence of these qualities in American music up to the very recent past.

The Hindemith orientation, with its emphasis on maximally unambiguous connections in sonority, line and contour in every dimension, and maximal clarity of event-demarcation and a kind of orderly succession of events that seems almost independent of their interior content, is still occasionally evident in the Mel Powell piece included as well as in the music of Leo Kraft and Norman Cazden. The *Six Preludes* of George Perle are characteristically idiosyncratic in their completely personal exploration of highly original ideas —here, particularly of rhythmic succession and harmonic structure—and characteristically impressive in the degree to which they project both coherence and contextual identity against what often appear to be formidable obstacles of constraint and speculative extension.

Arthur Berger's *Two Episodes* (1933), surely among the first American attempts at 12-tone composition, are remarkably mature in technique and invention, with a "harmonic," "phraseological" control of the 12-tone unfolding that is astonishingly sophisticated for such an early attempt by a 21-year-old composer in a direction whose ostensible further pursuit in his own work was deferred for a twenty-year "neoclassic" interim. This aspect of the *Episodes* also anticipates, indeed illuminates, some of the special qualities of continuity and sonority that made Berger's music the most "internally" generated, as well as the most externally original, of the Stravinsky school—those characteristics that led to Berger's being described as a "diatonic Webern." And Milton Babbitt's *Partitions* (composed for Helps) is perhaps the best possible introduction to his work: it realizes within a minute time scale a completely developed and extraordinarily ramified structure and projects, in two or three minutes, at least as many suggestions and articulations of ideas about the compositional possibilities of piano sound, registration and technique as can be found in all the rest of the album.

Partitions, too, is above all the piece for Helps's pianism, with its combination of a Lisztian mechanical command and an effortless fluency that conjoins a remarkable combination of articulative "coolness" and inflective sensitivity under the most strenuous technical conditions. But Helps's capacities also result in wonderfully intelligent and considerate performances of all the works; perhaps the beautiful penetration to the somewhat oblique qualities of the Berger and Perle pieces are the real musicianly tours de force, if not the most spectacular *coups de doigts*, in the entire collection.

In thus satisfying a serious need for representation—in adequate performance —of serious music otherwise unavailable, Victor (subsidized here by the Abby Whiteside Foundation) has performed a substantial service. But given the care and distinction of Helps's playing, and its invariable association, whenever I have heard him in live performance, with an extraordinarily delicate and lucid piano sound, the washtub sonority produced by whatever combination of instrument and engineering that emerges from these records is—in the one area for which the record company itself was wholly responsible—symptomatically lamentable.

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